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This dissertation, INVESTIGATING HOW SCHOOL COUNSELORS USING #SCCHAT ON TWITTER ADVOCATE FOR MARGINALIZED STUDENT POPULATIONS: A SOCIAL NETWORK ANALYSIS, by Adrienne Robertson, was prepared under the direction of the candidate's Dissertation Advisory Committee. It is accepted by the committee members in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree, Doctor of Philosophy, in the College of Education & Human Development, Georgia State University.

The Dissertation Advisory Committee and the student's Department Chairperson, as representatives of the faculty, certify that this dissertation has met all standards of excellence and scholarship as determined by the faculty.

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## PROFESSIONAL SOCIETIES AND ORGANIZATIONS

American Counseling Association

# Investigating How School Counselors Using #scchat on Twitter Advocate for Marginalized Student Populations: A Social Network Analysis

by

Adrienne Robertson

Under the Direction of Erin Mason, Ph.D.

## **ABSTRACT**

Advocacy work for marginalized student populations can help eliminate systemic barriers in schools. School counselors interact with millions of P-12 students daily and have the unique skills to advocate for marginalized students (U.S. Department of Education, 2019; Edirmanasinghe et al., 2022). Social media platforms such as Twitter allow school counselors to advocate outside of the school setting. It also allows them to obtain professional development and connect to other professionals (Schultz, 2022). In this study, the researcher seeks to learn how school counseling professionals' use of Twitter changed over ten years when using the #scchat hashtag and how their advocacy for marginalized student populations on Twitter has changed over time. Twitter Application Programming Interface (API) data was collected via NodeXL over a ten-year period, allowing the researcher to identify sample years of network data to answer the research questions. The researcher used Social Network Analysis (SNA) to identify

relationships and influencers within the networks and quantitative content analysis to analyze the frequency of hashtags, specific words, and sentiment. The results show significant growth in using #scchat regarding the number of tweets and users. The density of the graphs decreased as the networks became more extensive, and the number of group clusters increased. The results also show increased advocacy over the ten years using words such as advocacy, advocate, equity, race, ethnicity, racism, transgender, LGBTQIA+, Black, Latinx, Asian, and Native American.

**INDEX WORDS:** Marginalized students, Advocacy, School Counseling, Twitter, Social Network Analysis, NodeXL, Social Media

Investigating How School Counselors Using #scchat on Twitter Advocate for Marginalized  
Student Populations: A Social Network Analysis

by

Adrienne Robertson, LCPC, NCC

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this dissertation to my grandma Mary Robertson who was here through the end of this journey. Whether you were aware or not, due to your dementia, you lived to see me become Dr. Robertson, and I hope you are proud. I love you and am so grateful for our talks over the last few years. I also dedicate this to my cousin Mindy. You supported me and celebrated me in all my wins, and if you were here, I know you would be celebrating me now. I miss you and think about you every day. Thank you for Otis; even though I got him under sad circumstances, he helped get me through this program. Lastly, I want to dedicate my work to my dad, Fred Robertson. Daddy, your sacrifice and support made me into the woman I am today. I will be forever grateful that you decided to change the narrative and be the father to me and my brothers that you did not get to experience. You literally dedicate everything to your kids, grandkids, and granddog. Thank you, I love you, and never doubt that you are the best daddy in the world!

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# **Investigating How School Counselors Using #scchat on Twitter Advocate for Marginalized Student Populations: A Social Network Analysis**

## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

When the Covid-19 pandemic shut down in-person attendance at U.S. schools, more than 55 million P-12 students became isolated to their homes where they attended school virtually (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019; Mariani et al., 2022). School counselors, who provide academic and mental health support for students, no longer had access to students to offer that same level of support (Mariani et al., 2022). A critical part of that support involves a school counselor's advocacy work. While being an advocate has always been a significant role for school counselors (ASCA, 2022), the trauma of the pandemic and oppressive systems that continue to plague marginalized students highlight why it is imperative that school counselors work to break down barriers.

Counselor educators often argue that the onset of the Covid-19 virus in 2020 and the closely coinciding murders of Ahmad Arbery, George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Rayshard Brooks, Tyre Nicols, and other Black people by the police meant the country was in a double pandemic of public health and systemic racism (Mason et al., 2021). However, Safir and Dugan (2021) described it as a quadruple pandemic of Covid-19, systemic racism, near economic collapse, and significant climate change. In the spring of 2020, unemployment rates significantly increased due to many businesses shutting down amid the Covid-19 pandemic, eventually leading to historic unemployment rates unseen since the great depression (Gassman-Pines et al., 2022). In April 2020, the unemployment rate spiked to 14.7%, increasing concerns for the U.S. economy (Long & Van Dam, 2020). Interestingly, as of March 2023, the unemployment rate dropped to 3.5% (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2023). Despite increased employment, people still struggle due to the cost of living rising faster than wages (USAfacts.org, 2023). Specifically, Black and

Latinx/Hispanic people whose median income is lower than their White counterparts continue to face housing and food insecurities (U.S. Census Bureau, 2022). Climate change during the pandemic impacted people worldwide, and unfortunately, marginalized populations who experienced extreme weather events struggled even more to recover due to Covid-19 social distancing barriers (Walton et al., 2021). Whether the issues discussed above are part of a double or quadruple pandemic, they suggest that everyone, especially school-aged children, has experienced physical and mental health struggles in the last few years (Safir & Dugan, 2021).

In addition to the national pandemics, other issues have emerged at state, federal, and local levels that have become highly politicized, directly or indirectly impacting P-12 education in the U.S. (Villavicencio et al., 2022). Critical Race Theory (CRT), Social-Emotional Learning (SEL), "Don't say Gay" bills, restrictions to reproductive rights and women's health, and immigration rights are a few of the significant issues plaguing our country and impacting youth in the U.S., particularly youth who have marginalized identities (Villavicencio et al., 2022).

Critical Race Theory (CRT), first introduced by law professors, says that one cannot ignore race regarding legal practices and the institutional paradigms that have oppressed people of color (Caldwell, 1996). In recent years the concept of using CRT in schools has been thrust into the media. Individuals lacking education on aspects of CRT may assume that teaching it in P-12 schools is divisive. No teacher, counselor, or principal teaches CRT to P-12 students, which can further cause confusion and misunderstanding (Morgan et al., 2022). The "Don't Say Gay" bill proposed and passed by the Florida state legislature bans P-12 educators from discussing gender identity with students, which further impacts the safety of students who identify as LGBTQIA+ (Carlisle, 2022). Unfortunately, many states have followed Florida and proposed their own bill versions. Social Emotional Learning (SEL) is a school initiative to help students

understand self-awareness, cooperation, and problem-solving skills (CASEL, 2022). Due to the spread of misinformation, people accuse SEL work of being a cover-up for CRT use in schools and feel it could influence students' political views (Kaspar & Massey, 2023). Historically, SEL teaches students life skills such as emotion regulation, healthy communication, and conflict resolution, but some legislators believe time should be primarily spent on academics (Massey & Kaspar, 2023). *Roe vs. Wade*, a federal law that banned individual states from making abortion illegal, was overturned by the Supreme Court on June 24, 2022. It brought the controversy regarding women's reproductive health and rights to the forefront. While some may not understand how *Roe vs. Wade* impacts school-aged children directly, it affects anyone with a uterus (especially minors) who could become pregnant through rape or sexual abuse and cannot legally obtain an abortion in their state. Lastly, immigration rights remain a conflict, especially after the 2017 executive orders signed by former President Trump. Banning immigrants from countries that are primarily Muslim, the order to build a wall between the U.S. and Mexico, and the deportation of current immigrants, represent an attack on foreign-born people (Paik, 2020).

These politicized issues are part of why systemic racism, sexism, xenophobia, homophobia, and ableism affect marginalized student populations in P-12 schools. Marginalized students are more likely to encounter discrimination, microaggressions, and other forms of oppression in the education system than their peers who hold dominant identities (Villavicencio et al., 2023). The Covid-19 pandemic and political polarization have further highlighted the inequities in P-12 schools, increased mental health issues, and the need for school counselor support and student advocacy (Brown et al., 2022).

There has been a significant increase in mental health issues among school-aged children in the U.S. (Brown et al., 2022). One study reported increased anxiety and depression in

adolescents two months after online learning began (Garagiola et al., 2022). Emergency room visits related to suicide increased by 50.6% for girls and 3.7% for boys ages 12-17 between February-March 2019 and February-March 2021 (Hertz et al., 2022). Two studies, one in Australia and the other in China, found significant adverse changes in youth mental health associated with Covid-19 (Hertz et al., 2022). In California, students who rated their mental health wellness at a seven or higher on a ten-point scale was 68% pre-pandemic (Children Now, 2023). During the pandemic, that percentage decreased to 39% (Children Now, 2023). Another survey from the spring of 2021 reported that 56% of elementary students said their lives changed significantly with Covid-19 (Robertson et al., 2023). Students experienced the loss of in-person learning and the ability to participate in extracurricular activities and milestone events (e.g., sports, theater, prom, and graduation; Fish et al., 2020). Although research continues to emerge regarding the effects of Covid-19, people can still only speculate on the influence mental health issues will have on children and adolescents in the long term.

To assist in mitigating some of the impacts Covid-19 has on school-aged youth, schools can utilize their school counselors. School counselors are mental health professionals who look at students holistically and can provide academic and social support. (Brown et al., 2022). They support all students, especially marginalized populations, and can facilitate support at each of the three tiers (Savitz-Romer et al., 2021). School counselors are also advocates for their students and school communities. For example, they can advocate for increased SEL lessons for the entire school or provide messaging that their office is safe for LGBTQIA+ students by hanging a rainbow flag and encouraging others to do the same. They can advocate for different student needs and gain support from peers. By advocating for systemic change, they can positively influence marginalized students' academic, career, and social-emotional success (Welfare et al.,



2021). This study aims to investigate school counseling professionals using #scchat on Twitter to advocate for marginalized student populations.

This chapter begins by providing a literature review that describes how Covid-19 and discrimination impacted marginalized student populations' mental health wellness. The researcher discusses the current sociopolitical climate and the attacks on CRT and transgender students. Followed by further detail regarding two specific marginalized identities, race/ethnicity and sexual/gender identity, and how sociopolitical conflict perpetuates the oppressive systems. Next, the chapter discusses school counselors and advocacy, followed by social media and advocacy. Lastly, the researcher explains school counselors' experience with social media and how it can be another tool to advocate for marginalized students in P-12 schools.

### **Literature Review**

2020 impacted the world as thousands died from Covid-19, crowds protested systemic racism and police violence, businesses struggled to operate, and school buildings closed their doors. Over half a billion P-12 children were forced to become virtual learners worldwide (Sonnenschein et al., 2021). According to the U.S. Census (2020), 93% of school-age children engaged in virtual learning during 2020. Even with many schools reopening in the fall of 2020, there were constant disruptions due to contact tracing of Covid-19 infections and school staff shortages due to quarantine (Gassman-Pines et al., 2022). These educational disruptions heavily impacted school-aged children, but these were more pronounced in children with marginalized identities (Gassman-Pines et al., 2022). Black and Latinx/Hispanic low-income families lacked access to home internet and appropriate devices, which impacted their ability to attend classes virtually and do homework (Auxier & Anderson, 2020; Kamenetz, 2020). The lack of access to the Internet also made it more difficult for students to access their school counselor regarding post-secondary and mental health support (Savitz-Romer et al., 2021). Underserved school

districts that serve Black and Brown students had issues providing adequate instruction, and children with disabilities in those schools also lost services (Gibson, 2022). Whereas districts that served predominantly White students had the resources and access to equipment to provide virtual learning opportunities (Gibson, 2022). A year after the pandemic began, students generally reported that learning obstacles decreased. Still, the barriers for Black and Latinx/Hispanic students persisted at a higher rate than their White peers (Robertson et al., 2023). Unfortunately, Covid-19 was not the only negative impact on marginalized students in the last few years.

### **Marginalized Student Populations**

Marginalized identities include, but are not limited to, race and ethnicity, gender and sexual identity, ability status, and religious practices (Hays & McLeod, 2022). These groups experience discrimination based on their identity, which can occur socially, politically, or economically. Throughout this paper, marginalized will be the umbrella term for youth with minoritized identities. While there are many different forms of marginalization that youth experience, this study focused on race/ethnicity and gender, and sexual identities.

Although Covid-19 and the hostile sociopolitical climate significantly impacted marginalized youth's physical and mental health, these factors are not a new development. Historically, school-aged children and adolescents who are racially, sexually, and religiously minoritized or have a disability experience more barriers than their privileged counterparts (Carlisle, 2022; Edirmanasinghe et al., 2022). Specifically, within recent years race, ethnicity, and sexual and gender identity have had increased attention across the United States (Pletta et al., 2021; Williams et al., 2022). Political agendas and increased polarization of beliefs have appeared to put those identities in the middle of the turmoil.

All youth deserve access to appropriate medical and mental health care and education. Marginalized youth, unfortunately, do not always have this access which impacts their social determinants of health. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines the social determinants of health as "the conditions in which people are born, grow, work, live, and develop, and the wider set of forces, including economic policies, social norms, and political systems, that shape the conditions of daily life and impact health outcomes." (Cotton & Shim, p. 1, 2022; World Health Organization, 2021). Education is one of the five domains of the Social Determinants of Health, and it is not the only domain that positively or negatively influences health outcomes (Giorgi et al., 2022).

There are also social determinants of mental health. While they are less researched, they are critical, especially in children and adolescents (Cotton & Shim, 2022). These mental health determinants include economic instability, education, social and community context, health and health care, neighborhood and environment, parental psychosocial factors, and adverse childhood experiences (ACES) (Cotton & Shim, 2022). Students, particularly those with marginalized identities, can struggle academically when they experience one or more negative aspects of the above social determinants. The Covid-19 pandemic created a world where all children and adolescents' social determinants of mental health were affected. Hospitals reported that emergency room visits for mental health-related concerns for children increased from late March to October 2020 (Sugg et al., 2021). Emergency room rates increased by 24% for 5–11-year-old children and 31% for adolescents 12-17 compared to 2019 rates (Radhakrishnan et al., 2022). The mental health conditions (MHCs) associated with the visits included but were not limited to depression, anxiety, impulse-control disorders, trauma, and stressor-related disorders, eating disorders, and obsessive-compulsive disorders (Radhakrishnan et al., 2022). While

researchers break down the statistics by age, there is no information regarding the racial identity of the children and adolescents involved in these emergency room visits. Radhakrishnan et al. (2022) also reported that as of June 2021, about 140,000 US youth lost a parent or caregiver to Covid-19. Data states that many essential workers held marginalized racial identities (Gibson, 2022; Grooms et al., 2022). When the race and ethnicity of those diagnosed with Covid-19 became available, there was a staggering disproportion of deaths in Black, Latinx/Hispanic, and Native American communities (Grooms et al., 2022). The lack of access to healthcare and medical resources contributes to those numbers (Gibson, 2022). The Latinx/Hispanic community, specifically immigrant families, was at higher risk of contracting the Covid-19 virus due to systemic barriers such as being essential workers (Weiss-Laxer et al., 2022). Many Black and Brown people did not have the luxury of working from home, which upheld the constant fear of contracting Covid-19 (Gibson, 2022).

### **Race and Ethnicity**

Research continuously demonstrates that schools with a majority of Black and Latino P-12 students are historically underserved even though they are the populations with the highest needs (Foxx et al., 2020). Post 9/11, Muslims in the U.S. were attacked and often considered a part of a terrorist organization (Vergani et al., 2022). In 2015, hate crimes toward Muslim Americans rose by 67% (Arredondo & Toporek, 2018). When Donald Trump won the presidential election, there was widespread fear among individuals holding marginalized identities due to increased discriminatory rhetoric. Muslim youth refugees from countries like Syria faced fears of deportation. After the 2016 election, hate crimes toward Muslim Americans rose by 25.9% in October 2017 than were reported in October 2015 (Arredondo & Toporek, 2018).

In 2013 Chicago's Mayor Rahm Emmanuel, with support from his school CEO Barbara Byrd-Bennett, announced the closing of 54 of Chicago's Public Schools (Ewing, 2018). Citing a budget deficit and proclaiming that the schools "were underutilized and under-resourced," Byrd-Bennett said, "children in certain parts of our city have been cheated out of the resources they need..." (Ewing, 2018, p. 4). Ninety percent of the schools set to close were majority Black (Ewing, 2018). Systemic racism negatively affects racially minoritized children and adolescents individually and institutionally (Zong et al., 2021). Many racially minoritized students attend underfunded schools, which can affect their ability to succeed academically (Cotton & Shim, 2022). Unfortunately, due to schools being inherently racist, this does not come as a surprise, and schools can perpetuate inequality for marginalized students, making them feel unsafe, undervalued, and unworthy (Brown, 2016; Mason et al., 2021). Black, Latinx/Hispanic, and Native American students have lower levels of academic success, receive higher numbers of discipline referrals, and are less likely to be referred to honors or AP courses than their white counterparts (Cheatham & Mason, 2021; Foxx et al., 2020; Mayes & Hines, 2014; Seider et al., 2019). These barriers can lead to low career self-efficacy for Black and Latinx students (Albritton et al., 2020). While systemic racism has historically discriminated against marginalized populations, Covid-19 and the sociopolitical climate further exacerbated the impact racism has on P-12 students' physical and mental health.

### ***Physical and Mental Health***

Almost daily, mainstream media outlets publicized significant issues such as police brutality toward Black people, separating families at the Mexican border, and hate crimes against Asian Americans. Since 2016, there has been an increase in hateful rhetoric toward immigrants, Muslims, and Black students (Arredondo & Toporek, 2018). Zong et al. (2021) said that The

STOP AAPI HATE organization received 6603 reports of incidents targeting Asian Americans occurred from March 19, 2020, to March 31, 2021, and 11% of those calls involved children and adolescents (0-17 years old). This number increased to 9081 reports in June 2021 (Zong et al., 2021). Latinx/Hispanic immigrants, specifically from Mexico, have experienced harmful political speech labeling them criminals and rapists (Stafford et al., 2019).

Asian children experienced xenophobia and racial discrimination, threatening their mental health (Ren et al., 2022). The hateful rhetoric from former President Donald Trump referring to the virus as the "Chinavirus" may have further increased hate crimes and Sinophobia which is the dislike of Chinese people and culture (Cheah et al., 2020; Ren et al., 2022). Cheah et al. (2020) found in their study of Chinese parents and youth that they experienced or witnessed racial discrimination against Asian Americans due to Covid-19. These results showed increased anxiety and depressive symptoms in the participants due to racial discrimination (Cheah et al., 2020).

The trauma and fear that immigrant children face became more apparent when the Trump administration implemented "Zero tolerance" policies that separated children at the border (Siegal, 2022). Children under 18 became defined as unaccompanied minors because they did not have a legal guardian or parent in the U.S. or family in the U.S. that could provide immediate care (Siegal, 2022). Youth traveling with their families to seek asylum from countries such as El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala experienced multiple forms of trauma during their journey, only to experience further trauma of being detained and held in detention centers separated from their families (Siegal, 2022). During this time, they were more vulnerable to mental and physical health concerns and had an increased risk of contracting the Covid-19 virus (Siegal, 2022). Due to their citizenship status, these youth had limited access to resources (i.e., medical care,

clothing, and family support). Still, they were expected to enroll in public school and learn English (Siegel, 2022). Limited essential resources can influence an immigrant child's academic success and ability to function in society (Siegal, 2022).

Black people experienced pandemic stress exasperated by racial tensions (Matthews et al., 2021). Compared to their white counterparts, Black youth under 13 have two times the suicide rate indicating a significant public health crisis (Cohen et al., 2022). Since 1991, self-reporting of suicide attempts and injuries has decreased in all other racial/ethnic groups except Black youth (Cohen et al., 2022). Several studies have indicated Black youth who experience higher levels of racial discrimination also have increased levels of depressive symptoms (Lavner et al., 2022). Racism continuously drives health inequities that can lead to psychological, physical, and academic issues (Lavner et al., 2022). Sadly, barriers such as lack of resources, insurance, and cultural stigma, keep Black youth from obtaining mental health treatment (Planey et al., 2019).

Research shows that youth with marginalized racial identities who experience discrimination can suffer from anxiety, stress, low self-esteem, and diminished overall well-being (Goodwin et al., 2022). Interestingly, the most substantial relationship is between discrimination and depression among marginalized youth (Goodwin et al., 2022). Schools can lead from a social justice perspective wherein advocacy eliminates systemic barriers for students. Many schools lack the resources and support to meet their students' academic and mental health needs from marginalized backgrounds. Still, since the global protest after the murder of George Floyd, school districts have invested a greater focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion (Foxx et al., 2020; Villavicencio et al., 2023). Unfortunately, due to the political influence on the educational system, there has been backlash toward these policies.

### *Sociopolitical Climate*

Delgado and Stefancic (2023) said, “The critical race theory (CRT) movement is a collection of activists and scholars engaged in studying and transforming the relationship among race, racism, and power” (p. 3). Drs. Derrick Bell, Kimberle Crenshaw, and Richard Delgado influenced CRT's development and stressed the acknowledgment of race (Morgan, 2022). Initially introduced in law, CRT states that racism affects the bias and outcomes of our legal system (Morgan, 2022). It means that race must be considered and that it impacts what sort of consequences a person receives when charged with a crime. While they all operate under the umbrella of CRT, many other marginalized populations have formed smaller branches (Delgado and Stefancic, 2023). Asian American, Latino, LGBTQIA+, Muslim, and Native American scholars developed their own set of priorities, such as immigration policy or indigenous people's rights (Delgado and Stefancic, 2023).

Although CRT began in law, it expanded to other disciplines, including education and educator training (Taylor, 2023). Higher education scholars such as Edward Taylor, David Gillborn, Gloria Ladson-Billings, Adrienne Dixson, and Marvin Lynn use CRT to discuss inequities in the educational system (Taylor, 2023). The work seeks to address systemic racism in schools by including race in theory and pedagogy when training teachers, counselors, and principals (Ladson-Billings, 2023). Interestingly, due to misinformation and political agendas, many believe that CRT creates more division and can make white children feel a sense of guilt about their whiteness (Gutzmann, 2022; Morgan, 2022). P-12 schools do not teach CRT to students, but many have been accused of teaching it (Morgan, 2022). According to Schwartz (2020), forty-two states signed into law or have proposed legislation banning Critical Race Theory. States such as Virginia, Georgia, and Texas banned anything considered a "divisive topic," including discussions of race, and removed books from school library shelves promoting



diversity and equity. The legislation further restricts teachers' and counselors' ability to discuss topics involving race, sex, or class openly and honestly (Gutzmann, 2022). An attack on CRT affects P-12 educators and interferes with student learning and programs implemented to support marginalized students (Morgan, 2022). Particularly in schools with predominantly Black and Latinx/Hispanic students, the chance of violating the law increases as those populations naturally engage in conversation regarding culture (Gutzmann, 2022). Any topic incorporating diversity, equity, and inclusion may be heavily scrutinized and require previous approval before being taught to students (Gutzmann, 2022). By removing books, such as Angie Thomas's novel *The Hate You Give*, that address race and police violence, schools can further alienate marginalized students who may already feel invisible (Villavicencio et al., 2023). All students, no matter their race, are impacted by the lack of conversations regarding race and culture due to the increased diversity in the U.S. (Gutzmann, 2022).

### **Gender and Sexual Identity**

The LGBTQIA+ community has long been marginalized and discriminated against individually and institutionally, and school-age children's physical and mental health are specifically vulnerable to this discrimination. While a supportive family environment is a protective factor, many LGBTQIA+ youth were isolated during the Covid-19 school shutdowns, where they lost their social support through school and were confined to unsupportive environments at home (Fish et al., 2020). Not only did this further isolate these youth, but it also took away some of their safe spaces outside the home. The increased isolation and lack of feeling safe are risk factors for decreased mental health wellness. Although discrimination negatively impacts the entire LGBTQIA+, the attack on gender-minority school-aged children has been at the forefront of political agendas.

### ***Physical and Mental Health***

The Trevor Project reported that more than 66% of transgender and nonbinary youth had symptoms of major depressive disorder, and over 75% had symptoms of generalized anxiety disorder (Kameg, 2021; The Trevor Project, 2020). Transgender and non-binary (TNB) students also have higher suicidal ideation than their cisgender peers (Pletta et al., 2022). Parents of TNB children reported increased fear and concern for their child's mental health and safety (Pletta et al., 2022). Simons (2021) wrote that gender-minority youth who attend unsafe schools said they were bullied and harassed. TNB youth have a suicide rate seven times higher than transgender adults.

LGBTQIA+ youth, specifically transgender youth, experience health disparities such as discrimination and lack of gender-affirming care. (Kameg, 2021). Arkansas House Bill 1570 (HB 1570) is the first legislation to restrict healthcare providers from providing gender-affirming care for transgender or nonbinary youth, but they were not the last (Kameg, 2021).

### ***Sociopolitical Climate***

Since the 2016 presidential election, the transgender community has seen increased discrimination and stigma regarding policies at the state and national levels (Pletta et al., 2022). According to the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), 34 U.S. states have enacted or proposed legislation discriminating against transgender youth (ACLU, 2022). Those bans include access to gender-affirming healthcare, participation in sports, single-sex facility restrictions, and the transgender military ban (ACLU, 2022; Pletta et al., 2022). Loss of access to healthcare affects about one-third of transgender youth who receive hormone therapy (Kuper et al., 2022). Florida's famous "Don't Say Gay" bill was highly publicized in the media for censoring what can and cannot be said in Florida classrooms (Carlisle, 2022). Soon after, other states appeared to

follow suit, potentially threatening the physical and mental health of transgender youth and their families. Texas Governor Greg Abbott even demanded that the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) investigate families who provide gender-affirming medical care for suspected child abuse (Kuper et al., 2022). These discriminatory actions further explain why over 50% of transgender or nonbinary youth have had severe suicidal ideations, and 20-35% have made an attempt (Kameg, 2021; The Trevor Project, 2020).

### **Intersectionality**

Race, ethnicity, gender, and sexual identity are marginalized identities that have historically experienced discrimination. Each alone is crucial, but the intersectionality of multiple marginalized identities must also be acknowledged. Research states that Black students are more likely to be arrested in school than their White peers, but Black girls specifically receive three times the number of referrals than White girls (Williams et al., 2022). Sexual minority youth who are also racially marginalized can experience discrimination and violence due to both identities, negatively impacting their mental health (Mallory & Russell, 2021). The deep division of beliefs toward abortion exemplifies how sociopolitical issues affect racially minoritized girls. Roe vs. Wade was overturned by the U.S. supreme court on June 24, 2022, returning the power of abortion laws to individual states. States that already had abortion bans in place went into effect immediately after the court's decision. Some of these bans were so extreme that they did not allow abortions, even in cases of rape or incest (Henderson, 2022). In July 2022, a story of an 11-year-old girl from Ohio made national news when she sought an abortion in Indiana after becoming pregnant through rape (Henderson, 2022). In 2019, Ohio passed a law banning abortions after six weeks, when a fetal heartbeat can be detected. While there is scrutiny as to whether the story of the 11-year-old was true, the report brings more concern for the well-

being of young girls and people with uteruses, who may become pregnant through rape or incest and cannot lawfully have an abortion. Aside from individual beliefs, *Roe vs. Wade*, and the topic of abortion in general, is a significant event that disproportionately affects minoritized women, including adolescent girls, compared to their white counterparts (Solazzo, 2019). The intersectionality of race, gender, and social class increases stigma and care access (Brown et al., 2022; Solazzo, 2019).

Today's sociopolitical issues continue to perpetuate discrimination and systemic racism, but none of these things are new. With the growth of the internet and social media, school-aged youth have immediate access to news and information that was not always accessible before new technology. They see videos like George Floyd's murder, unaccompanied minors in cages at the Mexican border, and news coverage of school shootings like the one in Uvalde, Texas. The vicarious or direct trauma of continuously seeing people that share their identities locked up and killed affects marginalized students' mental health. The trauma negatively influences their ability to concentrate and regulate emotions, disrupting their learning (Dombo & Sabatino, 2019). Social justice and advocacy work are incredibly critical for these marginalized student populations. One can advocate for removing barriers that prevent student growth and development and promote social justice to end oppression for all individuals and institutions (Rose, 2020). Working with racial, gender, and sexually minoritized youth highlights the need for advocacy due to historical discrimination and government policies perpetuating inequities in schools and society (Edirmanasinghe et al., 2022; Pletta et al., 2022). School counselors have the training and knowledge to advocate for students and are ethically required to do so (Edirmanasinghe et al., 2022).

## **School Counselor Advocacy**

According to the Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Education Programs (CACREP) standards (2016), school counselors are leaders, advocates, and systems change agents in P-12 schools. The American School Counseling Association (ASCA) ethical standards (2022) state that school counselors "advocate for equitable, and anti-oppressive and anti-bias policies and procedures, systems and practices, and provide effective, evidence-based and culturally sustaining interventions to address student needs" (A.1.j).

School counselors advocate for individuals and groups while empowering students to advocate for themselves (Haskins & Singh, 2017). They also advocate against policies that enable systemic barriers toward marginalized populations, such as dress code and discipline policies (Haskins & Singh, 2017). They can encourage students to create a Gay Straight Alliance (GSA) club or provide staff training on how trauma symptoms appear in the classroom. School counselors are uniquely positioned to create systemic change in their schools, thus making education more equitable (Edirmanasinghe et al., 2022). Their advocacy skills and view of the whole child allow them to be the liaison connecting all parts of a student's microsystem, such as parents and teachers (Brown et al., 2022). They work collaboratively with teachers, administrators, students, parents, and the community on issues impacting the students, where they often must advocate for what is best for them (Chang, 2022). Using evidence-based practices, school counselors can obtain and analyze student data to show why specific research-supported interventions benefit students (Goodman-Scott et al., 2019). An example of data school counselors can present is the disproportionate number of suspended Black and Latinx preschool boys (Stegelin et al., 2020). Boys comprise of 54% of preschool enrollment but represent 79% of suspensions (Stegelin et al., 2020). These suspensions are early academic derailments that promote the school-to-prison pipeline (Welfare et al., 2021). School counselors

can advocate for training in implicit bias or an SEL intervention to support Black and Latinx/Hispanic preschool boys. Since many school counselors are a part of leadership teams at their schools, they can use data and expertise to promote change (Oehrtman & Dollarhide, 2020).

While advocacy is crucial to the school counselor's role, they must always consider their students' racial, ethnic, cultural, and economic backgrounds (Brown, 2016). They must strive to increase their cultural awareness and engage in antiracist practices. This work involves acknowledging their privileged identities and identifying their implicit bias. School counselors must also learn how to be antiracists in their advocacy work. The term antiracist is not new, but it has been thrust to the forefront of education by scholars such as Dr. Ibram X Kendi and Dr. Bettina Love. An antiracist actively supports policies that dismantle systemic racism and oppression and promote racial equity (Kendi, 2019; Holcomb-McCoy, 2022). Dr. Holcomb-McCoy (2022) stated that "Being an antiracist counselor requires interrogating one's racial consciousness and the impact of one's behaviors in counseling relationships with Black and Brown students" (p. 9). Advocating for students is part of the work, but school counselors must work to change the systems that create the barriers in the first place. Lopez-Perry and Whitson (2022) presented a framework for school counselors to use when engaging in social justice advocacy at the legislative level. They incorporated the ACA's advocacy domains and competencies with Bolman and Deals political leadership framework to guide school counselors in dismantling oppressive systems (Lopez-Perry & Whitson, 2022). It is not the only resource, but it is a resource specifically focused on helping school counselors.

Counselor educators have written about advocacy and researched how school counselors can advocate for different populations. Cheatham and Mason (2021) discuss using the ACA Advocacy Competencies as a guide when doing career development group work with Black

Males. Mullen et al. (2019) studied school counselors' leadership self-efficacy and its impact on advocacy and social justice work. Simons (2021) found that school counselors who perceive transgender and intersex students positively indicate higher levels of gender minority advocacy competence. Most of this work surrounds advocacy work that occurs in a face-to-face format. Social media is another way to engage in social justice and advocacy. Particularly for movements surrounding inequities that marginalized populations face every day. Anyone can advocate on social media, but there is an increased need for research regarding how people participate in advocacy on social media platforms. The following literature describes Twitter, a social networking platform, and it gives examples of advocacy using social media.

### **Social Media and Advocacy**

Boyd and Ellison (2008) recognize SixDegrees.com as the first social networking site launched in 1997. Before Tik Tok, Snapchat, and Facebook, there were sites like BlackPlanet, Myspace, and Cyworld (i.e., a Korean-based forum) (Boyd & Ellison, 2008). With the success of the internet came the development of social media, which continues to be ever-changing. Social media and social networking can be used interchangeably and have similar meanings. Social media is the online platform people use to share information, and social networks are the structures created between individuals or groups (Zhao et al., 2021).

Twitter is a popular social networking platform with 192 million active users, with 55 million people using it daily (Lin, 2021). It is often called microblogging since users can only post 280-character messages called "tweets." Initially, the platform allowed 140 characters, but in 2017 they increased the limit to 280. People who subscribe to a user's tweets are called followers. Those followers can like, comment, or "retweet" the user's tweet, increasing exposure to other followers. Someone can follow an individual's account or an organization's account.

They can also follow popular or trending topics by searching hashtags. Users create hashtags using the number (#) sign and phrase with no spaces. A few examples are #BlackLivesMatter (BLM), #suicideawareness, and #metoo. Groups use these hashtags to create social justice movements and bring awareness to issues like police brutality, mental health, or sexual harassment (Al'Uqdah et al., 2019). It is a form of advocacy and activism that brings awareness or a call to action on issues (generally). Hashtags invite people to engage in advocacy and activism through social media aimed at social justice issues plaguing marginalized populations. Social media platforms like Twitter connect people and spread information quickly. While the quick dissemination of the information has increased access to news for some marginalized groups, limitations exist, such as the possible spread of unverified or incorrect information (Al'Uqdah et al., 2019). A small number of Twitter users spread false or "fake" news that can cause mass panic. While social media sites censor language like hate speech, they have difficulty verifying false information (Xu et al., 2020).

Twitter has become a powerful professional networking platform for politicians, large corporations, higher education institutions, and P-12 educators, to name a few. During the 2016 presidential election, Hilary Clinton and Donald Trump used Twitter to reach voters (Buccoliero et al., 2020). Since Twitter is the platform most used by politicians, its influence on elections could be significant (Khan et al., 2020). Kwak et al. (2018) said that Americans still seem to have differing views regarding using social media in politics. Political leaders use strategic rhetoric to influence followers to benefit from their ideas. Some believe this increases divisiveness, while others believe it is a positive way to express their political views (Kwak et al., 2018; Wilkins et al., 2019).



Large corporations may tweet announcements of sales or changes in policies. As corporations have focused more on diversity, equity, and inclusion in recent years, they may also use Twitter to acknowledge Black History Month, Pride Month, or other cultural celebrations. School districts and educators may also use Twitter to disseminate information such as critical dates or sporting event results to students and parents. When Covid-19 closed schools for face-to-face instruction, students and educators became isolated and cut off from specific resources in their buildings. Social media platforms like Twitter allow educators, like school counselors, to communicate important information such as college application deadlines or online events.

While platforms like Twitter can have many uses, it is a great way to connect to others in one's profession and advocate for social justice. One study about Professional Learning Networks (PLN) found that teachers reported using social media to engage in professional development (PD), where they learned about new technology, tools, and resources to improve their teaching (Trust et al., 2018). They said the professional development obtained using Twitter was more meaningful than some of their required in-person PD (Trust et al., 2018). Sun (2020) found that a tweet chat group (#dsma, Diabetes Social Media Advocacy) reciprocated conversations and created online relationships similar to people who would develop relationships offline. It suggested that social dynamics through Twitter emulate those in the physical, social world (Sun, 2020).

Research surrounding social media continues to expand along with the platforms themselves. Social Network Analysis allows researchers to study the platforms, how people use them, and the relationships of the users (Cox, 2017). Tools such as UCINET and NodeXL allow researchers to analyze social media quantitatively and qualitatively and use graphs to visualize the data (Borgatti et al., 2018). Vermeer and Araujo (2020) explored how different types of users

influence online interactions and the flow of information about professional soccer clubs on Twitter. Ince et al. (2017) examined how using other hashtags simultaneously with #BlackLivesMatter framed how people view the movement. Yum (2020) explored critical players on Twitter and how they play an essential role regarding Covid-19 news. Although there has been an increase in social media research with platforms such as Twitter, there is a lack of research surrounding school counselor use of Twitter.

### ***School Counselors and Twitter?***

In 2011, Dr. Erin Mason, a school counselor educator, and Dr. Danielle Schultz, a practicing school counselor at the time, created the #scchat (school counselor chat) hashtag to facilitate school counselor relationships and networking, provide and gain resources, and provide an overall supportive space for school counselors to build community. Like other hashtags, anyone, especially school counselors, could follow #scchat. Monthly live chats discussed how to use technology with students or how school counselors support student mental health. In August 2021, #scchat celebrated its 10-year "Twitterversary" (a term used to describe an anniversary for Twitter).

While there may be a significant number of school counselors who use Twitter, there is little to no research regarding how they use it. Schultz (2022) interviewed school counselors who use Twitter. She found that participants use Twitter to learn from other school counselors, obtain free professional development, and gain new perspectives on their work (Schultz, 2022). Participants also had negative perceptions of Twitter, such as it can be overwhelming with all of the information, it can take up a lot of time, and they have to be very cognizant of what they post (Schultz, 2022). Schultz's (2022) results align with other research involving educators and their

positive perceptions of Twitter. Unfortunately, there is no research involving actual data from Twitter.

School counselors can use Twitter to advocate for social justice for marginalized populations, but no literature discusses how it is done specifically for the profession. Research about school counselors and advocacy does not include the use of social media. There is literature discussing how people use social media to bring awareness and voice injustices which is a form of advocacy. Protesters in Iran utilized Twitter, email, and blogs to organize and provide updates, which journalists called the "Twitter Revolution" (Al'Uqdah et al., 2019). Tunisian and Egyptian citizens utilized social media platforms to bring light to the injustices they faced due to their government (Al'Uqdah et al., 2019). Although you will find negative responses about the Black Lives Matter movement on social media platforms, it started as a hashtag and has elevated to become a controversial topic in American politics (Al'Uqdah et al., 2019). Some would argue that mainstream media attention helps bring more awareness to the movement. In contrast, others would say that social media's broad audience allows the movement's purpose to be manipulated and altered (Ince et al., 2017).

Throughout this chapter, literature supported the need for increased advocacy for marginalized P-12 populations. There is evidence that school counselors have the skills to advocate. There is also evidence that Twitter is a widely used tool that connects people from all over the world, which supports the argument that Twitter can be used as an advocacy tool by school counselors. Further research needs to be conducted to learn more about advocacy use on social media platforms.

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## Chapter 2

### Literature Review

The mental health of P-12 students is in a state of crisis. According to the CDC (2022), 37% of high school students reported poor mental health during Covid-19 in a 2021 survey. The percentage of mental health-related emergency room visits increased by 31-50% among children and adolescents in the U.S. (Hamatani et al., 2022). Children who experienced clinically significant anxiety and depression doubled from the pre-pandemic numbers (Hamatani et al., 2022). The Covid-19 pandemic affected children worldwide; unfortunately, school-aged children of marginalized identities were significantly affected compared to their White peers (Sabatello et al., 2021).

Marginalized students experience different forms of discrimination and oppression (Villavicencio et al., 2023). According to the CDC (2022), 36% of high school students reported that they experienced racism before or during the pandemic. Asian students reported the highest amount of racism at 64%, and Black students and multiracial students both reported 55% (CDC, 2022). Black families experiencing racism and Covid-19 simultaneously had higher rates of overall poorer health, chronic diseases, and risk of mortality from Covid-19 (Anakwe et al., 2022). Cheah et al. (2020) reported that nearly 1900 reports of discrimination against Asian Americans were made since March 19, 2020. The reports align with the violence toward Asians during Covid-19.

Marginalized students must receive support. School counselors are trained professionals who advocate for marginalized student populations on an individual and systemic level (Brown et al., 2022; Welfare et al., 2021). While advocacy work is typically done through direct conversations with stakeholders, school counselors can also utilize social media to advocate for

student needs. This study seeks to investigate school counselors' use of Twitter to advocate for marginalized student populations.

### **Marginalized Students**

Although there are multiple different marginalized identities, this study focuses on race/ethnicity and sexual and gender minorities. It is also imperative to acknowledge intersectionality and how discrimination shows up for students with multiple marginalized identities. Due to the embedded racism in schools, marginalized student populations have a long history of discrimination (Edirmanasinghe et al., 2022). Specifically, schools with large populations of Black, Latinx/Hispanic, and Native American students are often underfunded and lack resources that support student success (Gamble & Lambros, 2014). Black and Latinx/Hispanic students have the highest needs but receive fewer resources (Foxx et al., 2020). These underserved student populations receive more behavioral referrals than their white peers and harsher punishments for those referrals (Williams et al., 2022).

When Covid-19 arrived in the U.S., Asians experienced increased harassment and violence (Zong et al., 2022). Since the virus originated in China, many people, including President Trump, blamed the Chinese (Cheah et al., 2020). Unfortunately, Asians of different ethnic backgrounds were also attacked verbally and physically (Zong et al., 2022). Immigrant children seeking asylum were locked in cages while detained at the Mexican American border (Siegel, 2022). Black children are constantly exposed to systemic racism and the murder of other Black people at the hands of the police (Lavner et al., 2022). All these experiences have an impact on mental health. Youth who experience racial discrimination and oppression have an increased possibility of depression, anxiety, and low self-esteem (Goodwin et al., 2022). Decreased mental health can interrupt a student's academic motivation and ability to succeed (Cheah et al., 2020; Lavner et al., 2022; Siegel, 2020).

The LGBTQIA+ community has historically experienced discrimination, and within recent years transgender and non-binary youth appear to be the primary target. Transgender and non-binary (TNB) youth experience major depressive disorder (MDD) and generalized anxiety disorder (GAD) and have increased suicidal ideation (Kameg, 2021; Simons, 2021). They experience bullying and harassment at school and at home (Simons, 2021). For TNB youth with a supportive home environment, parents have increased concern for their child's safety (Pletta et al., 2022). Although the media and political focus has been on TNB youth, gay, lesbian, and bisexual youth continue to experience discrimination, too (Simons, 2018). School-aged children with these marginalized identities experience decreased mental health, ultimately impacting their academic success (Simons, 2018).

Covid-19 and the sociopolitical climate further marginalize racially, gender, and sexually minoritized youth (Pletta et al., 2022). With forty-two states passing or proposing bans on CRT and 185 proposed bills involving transgender youth, support and advocacy for students with these identities must be prioritized (ACLU, 2022; Schwartz, 2021). School counselors work with over 50 million students in U.S. schools (U.S. Department of Education, 2019). Their master's level training teaches them the skills to approach advocacy from an individual or institutional level (Haskins & Singh, 2017). School counselors are change agents that can influence change that dismantles systemic barriers for marginalized students (Welfare et al., 2021).

### **School Counselor Advocacy**

Advocacy is a term that school counselors know very well. It is a significant role highlighted by ASCA, and it is an ethical code for school counselors that they must follow (ASCA, 2019). School counselors view students holistically, addressing their academic, career, and social-emotional growth (Brown et al., 2022). They are the mental health experts in their

buildings, so they are more likely to identify students who need additional support (Mariani et al., 2022). School counselors provide that support using evidence-based practices to facilitate classroom lessons and small groups. Their work can lead to data that promotes systemic change (Oehrtman & Dollarhide, 2020).

Schools can be perceived as a microcosm of society, where inequalities targeting marginalized students are perpetuated (Edirmanasinghe et al., 2022). Therefore, to engage in effective advocacy practices, school counselors must engage in antiracism to ethically serve P-12 students (Leigh-Osroosh et al., 2023). They should be aware of the sociopolitical inequalities impacting marginalized students (Placeres et al., 2022). School counselors must also continually evaluate their assumptions, values, and biases and hold themselves accountable when they enable oppressive systems (Clemons & Cokley, 2022). Clemons and Cokley (2022) suggest that school counselors listen to and engage Black students, families, and communities as a way to engage in anti-racist work. School counselors should also listen and engage with all marginalized student races and ethnicities.

Using technology is a way school counselors can engage in advocacy work with families and communities. They can advocate through an after-school presentation to parents or use social media technology to engage parents. Social media platforms such as Twitter allow school counselors to connect with others in the profession, obtain resources, and advocate for marginalized student populations (Schultz, 2022).

## **Social Media**

### ***Advocacy and social media***

Social networking sites such as Facebook, Tik Tok, Snapchat, and Twitter provide people worldwide a way to obtain information quickly surrounding issues such as the war in Ukraine, the spread of Covid-19, school shootings, and systemic racism (Zhao et al., 2021). Activists

utilize Twitter to increase awareness of social justice issues like Black Lives Matter, protecting transgender youth, and mass shootings (Al'Uqdah et al., 2019). Politicians use Twitter to highlight their views on issues to sway the public (Khan et al., 2020). Using social media allows communication that navigates around traditional media, which can be controlled by the government in certain countries (Maxwell, 2022). To expand a social movement, users can use sites like Twitter to connect to key audiences and spread awareness (Maxwell, 2022).

While there is conflict regarding the accuracy of the information from social media sites, the increase in research using Social Network Analysis (SNA) assists in understanding how people use and engage with others online (Cox, 2017). Researchers use social media to learn about behaviors, trends, and the types of relationships users form with others (Tanaka, 2020). SNA can help researchers understand how social movements that advocate for ending specific injustices gain popularity (Tanaka, 2020). Since advocacy is a large part of a school counselor's identity, they can use social media to engage in the work. Twitter is one platform that school counselors can actively engage in to promote advocacy.

Twitter is a free social networking site that started in 2006 (Maxwell, 2022). Users create a Twitter handle that begins with an @ sign (i.e., @Ms\_Robertson84). It allows up to 280 characters per post which labeled it a microblogging platform. The posts are called tweets; others can reply, retweet, or like the tweet (citation). Tagged as one the most widely used social media platforms, more than 70 million people use Twitter daily (Cohen & Kossler, 2023)

### ***School Counseling and Twitter***

Across social media platforms, school counseling professionals can engage with other professionals through private groups, national and state organization pages, and follow specific individuals' accounts. They can follow different hashtags on Twitter to engage in topic-related content. #scchat (school counselor chat) is a school counselor-specific hashtag developed by two

counselor educators who are former school counselors (Schultz, 2022). Along with everyday use, there are organized live chats once a month where moderators ask questions and participants respond. According to Schultz (2022), there have been over 100 live chats using #scchat. Practicing school counselors can provide and receive resources for topics such as college planning, small groups, and social-emotional classroom lessons.

Schultz (2022) conducted a study with practicing school counselors and their use of Twitter. Using interviews, she identified themes surrounding school counselor experiences (Schultz, 2022). Those themes included the effects of Twitter usage, barriers, experiences, and the purpose of use (Schultz, 2022). The study provided critical information about school counselors' use of Twitter from their point of view to help researchers gain insight into the how and why. There is a lack of literature that researches explicitly school counselors and their Twitter use; therefore, Schultz's study was the first.

### **Current Study**

This study is an exploratory analysis of data obtained through Twitter. The #scchat hashtag is primarily used by school counseling professionals (i.e., school counselors, counselor educators, and school counselor district leadership), allowing them to connect, build relationships, and advocate for students. Two school counseling professionals initially created the hashtag (#scchat) for primary use by school counseling professionals on Twitter. Therefore, Twitter is the social media platform used in this study to collect data. Twitter Application Programming Interface (API) allows for data to be collected with special permissions, and researchers must register and obtain approval from Twitter to collect data.



## **Social Network Analysis**

It has been claimed that people on Earth are only six steps away from each other, often referred to as “six degrees of separation” (Bakhshandeh et al., 2011). The separation distance can depend on the network to which a person is connected. Researchers use Social Network Analysis to study these degrees of separation and identify the relationships among people, groups, or things (Hansen et al., 2020). Social Network Analysis (SNA) growth has significantly increased within the last decade, but the research method of SNA has a long history with sociologists (Lemay, 2019; Scott, 2017). They used it to explore social relationships among individuals and groups (Scott, 2017). Those relationships can be virtual, such as analyzing people's connections on Twitter or looking at co-workers' relationships within a corporation (Lemay, 2019).

SNA's primary focus is the interaction between the networks or individuals and how that interaction creates a framework (Sani-Bozkurt, 2021). It does not focus on individual behaviors. In SNA research, the individual or group is called a node, and the connection between them is called a tie (Hansen et al., 2020; Lemay, 2019). Nodes can also be called actors, users, or vertices, and ties can be edges (Borgatti et al., 2018; Hansen et al., 2020). SNA gives a visual and mathematical analysis of the relationships between two nodes (Aldahdouh & Aldahdooh, 2019). It allows researchers to analyze data quantitatively and qualitatively (Borgatti et al., 2018).

There have been SNA studies completed in the education profession. Wang and Fikis (2019) used SNA to examine the public opinion of the Common Core Standards on Twitter. They found many tweets that showed negative sentiment toward Common Core, which creates questions about whether social media affects educational policy (Wang & Fikis, 2019). Trust et al. (2018) looked at 400 instructional leaders' perceptions of online professional learning

networks (PLN), and they found that participants said their PLNs positively impacted their growth as an educator.

While growing research analyzes social networking sites, there is limited research about school counselor use of Twitter. Mason and Schultz (2013) provided suggestions for how school counselors can use Twitter. Twitter provides a platform for networking allowing school counselors to connect (Mason & Schultz, 2013). School counselors can engage in professional development and use their accounts for public relations to promote information to their school communities (Mason & Schultz, 2013). At the time of this study, the researcher found one article related to school counselors and Twitter. Schultz's (2022) qualitative study with practicing school counselors investigated how and why school counselors use Twitter. No studies to date analyze Twitter data using the #scchat hashtag. The significance of this study is to learn more about what school counseling professionals are tweeting, how they interact with others, and how they advocate.

The researcher has developed two research questions to investigate school counselors' use of Twitter to advocate for marginalized student populations.

**R1:** How have school counseling professionals' (i.e., school counselors, school counselor educators, district leaders over school counselors) use of Twitter changed over ten years when using the #scchat hashtag?

**R2:** How have school counseling professionals' (i.e., school counselors, school counselor educators, district leaders over school counselors) advocacy for marginalized populations changed over time when using Twitter?

### **Conceptual Framework**

This study analyzed school counseling professionals' Twitter use of the #scchat hashtag, explicitly investigating their advocacy practices and use over ten years. Using Feminist Theory

and Social Network Theory as the theoretical approaches, I explored the network's organizational structure surrounding #scchat. Social Network Analysis is used to identify relationships and their strengths, critical actors in the network, and the changes over time. This section discusses methodology, theoretical frameworks, participants, research team, positionality, data collection, data analysis, and key terms.

### **Feminist Theory**

“Feminists are made, not born. One does not become an advocate of feminist politics simply by having the privilege of having been born female.” (hooks, 2015, p. 7). This quote by bell hooks describes the epistemological and theoretical approach to this study. Constructionism is an epistemology that says how one creates knowledge is constructed by their interactions within the world (Crotty, 1998). Therefore, when bell hooks says, “Feminists are made,” constructionists would agree and say that a woman’s experiences within an oppressive patriarchal society influence one’s choice to become a feminist theorist. How they create knowledge (epistemology) influences the why (theory) of their research approach.

Feminist Theory is an umbrella term that includes multiple approaches such as Black, cultural, radical, and postmodern feminisms. Various types of feminism have different approaches, but all feminist theories place significant emphasis on power, including research (Grenz, 2015). The different feminist theories offer critiques of philosophies, biases, and assumptions and seek to eliminate oppression (Brisolara, 2014). Feminism also believes that the personal is political, and the political is personal; therefore, a feminist researcher cannot separate the impact of politics on one’s personal life or how they view their research topic. (Headley & Feather, 2021).

Further, feminists state that researchers must acknowledge intersectionality and how other identity dynamics, such as race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, sexual identity, age,

ability, and religion, come into play with feminist work (Brisolara, 2014). Social change cannot occur without addressing the political policies perpetuating oppression. Feminist theory is the framework for this study because the researchers believe school counselors operate within an oppressive system where politics impact their work with marginalized students. Many states have legislation restricting school counselors from discussing diversity, equity, or sexual identity (ACLU, 2023). These legislative actions are why feminist theory is critical for this study.

Feminism's focus on power and privilege was critical in this study. School counselors primarily identify as women, and that oppressed identity can appear in any environment. Although the data from this research study is public and there is no direct interaction with Twitter users, the researcher must acknowledge their power and privilege and how their counselor educator identity influences it. Although the researcher identifies with a school counselor identity, they do not currently work as a practitioner and hold the identity of a counselor educator more immediately.

A researcher can hold one of two positions in relation to the participants. They can be an outsider who is not a part of the population they are researching or an insider who is a part of the population (Brisolara, 2014). The positionality statement under the methods section for this study further describes the researcher's position as an insider (i.e., active on Twitter and utilizing the #scchat hashtag).

### **Social Network Theory**

Social Network Theory helps researchers understand how individuals are connected to some and not others (Rigby, 2012). A network is a group connected through a social relationship (Borgatti et al., 2018). Networks include people, groups, organizations, and other entities where information connects (Aldahdouh & AIDahdooh, 2019). The Theory's primary focus is on the

relationships between the people or groups in those networks (Borgatti & Ofem, 2010). The person or group is considered an individual node; their connection is called a tie (Wang & Fikis, 2019). Social networks include friendships, businesses, disease transmission, and political views (Borgatti et al., 2018). In a network of five people, there are five nodes. Within that network, those nodes could have up to ten direct ties. These ties serve as the highway that transports information between two nodes. The ability to exchange information depends on the strength of ties or if the ties even exist.

While the growth of social media and social networking sites has highlighted the use of Social Network Theory and Social Network Analysis, researchers utilized them well before the Internet (Liu et al., 2017). Social psychologists used mathematical theories to identify social groups in different networks formally, and several sociologists further enhanced the theoretical framework to understand formal and informal relationships (Liu et al., 2017). Sociometric analysis, interpersonal relations, and anthropological traditions are the three lines of research that contributed to the early development of Social Network Theory. Still, it was not until the 1960s that it became a coherent theoretical framework (Liu et al., 2017).

The researcher in this study used Social Network Theory to understand how some nodes are connected and others are not. Looking at the structure of the network, Social Network Theory will identify how information flows throughout the network, who has access to what data, and how much. The strength of ties between nodes is also a key element identified as weak or strong. The theory of weak ties suggests that distant and infrequent relationships are efficient, making giving and receiving a wide array of information faster with fewer expectations for reciprocation (Rigby, 2012). Strong ties suggest a consistent relationship among fewer nodes, and they are more homogenous (Hansen et al., 2020).

## Method

### Participants

Participants are Twitter users who used the #scchat hashtag during 2011-2021. Their username identifies them, often called a Twitter handle. Each user has a unique ID that consists of numbers. Twitter API data is public data and does not require the informed consent of the participants. Still, researchers must use caution when discussing users' tweets. There were previous attacks on educators through the Twitter platform, and the researcher must be aware of the costs of sharing Twitter handles. They must decide if sharing full usernames is appropriate or a safety issue. Historically, #scchat users identify as practicing school counselors, school counselor educators, and other school counseling professionals such as district and organization leadership; it is assumed that participants for this study identify similarly.

### Positionality

Acknowledging and describing the researcher's positionality in this study is critical. They are a former school counselor. They are active on Twitter, where they engage in advocacy work. They identify as a cisgender, biracial Black woman. The researcher started engaging with #scchat about two years after its creation (2013). Since then, they have actively engaged in monthly live chats, connected to other professionals, and posted tweets challenging oppressive systems. They are also a practicing clinical mental health counselor who works with diverse populations. Their education and work experience connect to their research which could impact how they engage with the data. Throughout the research process, they must continually examine their positionality and biases that come to the surface. Those biases include recognizing that the school counseling field is primarily White women (ASCA, 2020). According to ASCA (2020), 76% of its members were White, and 85% identified as female. As someone with intersecting

oppressed identities (Black and woman), the researcher must acknowledge how her biases affect data analysis.

The researcher recognized that as a counselor educator, their fear of punishment or retaliation is not as significant as when they were a practicing school counselor. They must remember they are privileged in their role. While the researcher is not exempt from potential consequences, they may not experience the level of scrutiny that practicing school counselors face can face within their district and community. School counselors work with children and adolescents under the age of 18. Therefore, it is assumed there is more parental involvement and monitoring of materials. States that have passed laws that do not allow P-12 educators to discuss diversity, equity, inclusion, race, sexual or gender identities influence the type of content school counselors can use (ACLU, 2023). If they use banned materials, they could face being fired and even criminal charges (citation).

Another bias surrounds how the researcher believes school counselors can and should use social media sites like Twitter to do advocacy work. Not everyone who uses Twitter has the confidence or understanding of advocacy work on social media. The researcher must remind themselves that school counselors' use of Twitter can occur on a spectrum. Some may be open to posting challenging tweets regarding oppressive systems, and others may want to engage with other professionals only. Lastly, it is critical to acknowledge conflicting views regarding the American School Counseling Association (ASCA). Although the researcher appreciates having a space specifically for school counselors, they also provide challenging feedback to the national organization regarding my views on their advocacy efforts. The researcher must remember that not everyone in the school counseling profession has their opinion of the national organization, and they must continually engage in conversations about their positionality and biases.

## Data Collection

Secondary data for this study was collected using NodeXL, an application add-on to Microsoft Excel. The Social Media Research Foundation created NodeXL to extract data from platforms such as Twitter, YouTube, Facebook, and Flickr (Aldahdouh & AlDahdooh, 2019). It allows researchers to explore networks and visualize data (Smith et al., 2009). Using the import feature, Twitter search network 2.0 was the type of data collected. The parameters were set for the hashtag, and dates were entered to eliminate data outside the timeline. How many tweets are collected from the Twitter API data depends on the size of the data set researchers want. If researchers wish to use a small data set, they can set the maximum number of tweets to 10,000. If they want to use a large data set, they can set the maximum number of tweets to 100,000. A researcher may wish to collect more data if a hashtag is widely popular. If a hashtag is not used frequently, researchers may set NodeXL's parameters for a more extended period to collect as many tweets with the hashtag as possible. It is critical to note that although the number is set to collect up to 20,000 tweets, depending on the number of times the hashtag was used will determine the amount of data imported, so there was no guarantee that the maximum number would be collected.

For this study, the researcher attempted to collect #scchat data from 2011-2021, setting the maximum number of tweets at 100,000. The hashtag was created in 2011, and for convenience, the researcher looked at a ten-year range. A ten-year time frame allows for the collection of longitudinal data. Next, the researcher collected yearly data slices, with a maximum number of 20,000. Although date parameters were set for specific years, NodeXL could import dates outside the parameters. When that occurs, researchers can utilize the import ID (i.e., a user's individually assigned ID from Twitter). Unfortunately, during the spring of 2023, Twitter API permissions were revoked, blocking any current and future Twitter data collection. On April



14, 2022, Elon Musk offered to buy Twitter and, on October 27, 2022, became the owner of Twitter (AP News, 2022). Since there was a controversial change in ownership, obtaining data before that change was critical to rule out any potential structural changes to Twitter that may impact data collection. The researcher could not utilize the import ID to capture only the tweets within a specific year. An additional explanation is provided in the results section.

### **Data Analysis**

Due to Twitter being a public platform, it does not require consent from the participants. For research question one, NodeXL was used to identify the number of nodes and directed ties within the graph. Social Network Analysis explored the #scchat networks by measuring density, in-degree and out-degree centrality, betweenness centrality, group clusters, and the clustering coefficient among the Twitter data. An exploratory content analysis was the appropriate method for research question two of this study. Content analysis is the proper method due to its ability to handle large volumes of data (Tanaka, 2020). Defined by some as a quantifying method, it is also a distinction between quantitative and qualitative content analysis (Tanaka, 2020). Quantitative content analysis measures something within texts, meaning the frequency that something occurs (i.e., hashtag, word, users mentioned) indicates something going on outside the texts (Boreus & Bergstrom, 2017). Qualitative does not include counting or measuring (Boreus & Bergstrom, 2017). Its focus is on the meaning of the text (Boreus & Bergstrom, 2017). For this study, quantitative content analysis was primarily used to analyze the types of hashtags used with tweets containing #scchat, the number of times words were used, and the positive and negative sentiment of specific words.

To provide further understanding, definitions for crucial terms regarding Twitter and SNA were provided below, followed by a description of how each research question was answered.

<b>Twitter Terms</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Twitter Handle	A username that begins with the @ sign
Tweet	It is a brief message where users can post thoughts, updates, or comments (Beal, 2011).
Follower/following	A follower is someone that subscribes to a user to see their tweets, and following is the term for a user who sees another user's tweets on their timeline (Beal, 2011).
Retweet	A retweet, abbreviated RT, is a user's action to tweet something posted by someone else (Beal, 2011).
Reply	The @reply is a response to another user's tweet. The reply can or cannot contain the user's name (Beal, 2011).
Like	Users use the like icon to show they like a tweet (Frimer et al., 2023).
Mention	When a Twitter user tags another using @username, it can be used for tweets, retweets, or replies.
Retweet with Mention	It is the same as a retweet; only the user includes the original person's username using the RT @username format (Beal, 2011).
Self-tweet	It is a tweet connected to itself, so the tie forms a loop (Tanaka, 2020).
Hashtag	A word or topic using the # prefix to organize topics, such as #suicideawareness (Beal, 2011). Users can follow or search the hashtag for other tweets about the subject.

<b>Social Network Analysis Terms</b>	<b>Definitions</b>
NodeXL	NodeXL is a network analysis tool for Microsoft Excel to collect, analyze, and visualize social networks (smrfoundation.org).
NodeXL Insights	It is a Microsoft Power BI report template that allows for creating interactive network reports with Twitter datasets (smrfoundation.org). A

	report consists of seventeen pages (start, overview, network, time, time grid, time joined, location, influencers, groups, top tweets, hashtags, words, sentiment, media, web link, compare two groups, compare four groups).
Network	The term network is used to describe the data in social network analysis. It is made up of nodes and ties. For example, if the imported hashtag data consists of 10 connected nodes (users), they are called a network. The data samples in this study were referred to as networks.
Node	A node is an individual user in a network (Borgatti et al., 2018). It is also referred to as an actor or user. The terms node and user were used interchangeably in this study.
Tie	A tie connects two nodes (Borgatti et al., 2018). It is also referred to as an edge. The terms tie, and connection were used interchangeably in this study.
Weighted tie	A weighted tie refers to the strength or frequency of a tie between two nodes (Hansen et al., 2020). If two Twitter users consistently retweet and mention each other, their tie would be stronger than a user with which they have limited interaction.
Mode	A mode is the type of nodes or actors in a network (Borgatti et al., 2018). This term is not used throughout the study. Still, Twitter users identified within the study can be individuals or organizations (i.e., @ASCAtweets is the account for the American School Counseling Association (ASCA), and @Ms_Robertson84 is the researcher's individual Twitter handle).
Clustering	Clustering is grouping different nodes into groups based on their distance or similarities.
Density	It is a measure of cohesion where the number of ties in the network is expressed as a

	proportion of the number of possible ties (Borgatti et al., 2018). The calculated density is between 0 and 1. The network metrics identified are the number of nodes, ties, and the clustering coefficient.
Clustering coefficients	Measures the amount of clustering in a network (Borgatti et al., 2018). It is calculated by measuring the density of ties of nodes that are connected to a specific node (Borgatti et al., 2018).
In and Out-degree Centrality	For a directed, non-valued graph, in-degree represents the number of incoming ties, and out-degree represents the number of outgoing ties (Borgatti et al., 2018). The graph will show the Twitter user (node) with the most outgoing ties to other counselors and the user (node) with the most incoming ties, often referred to as the most popular or essential node in a graph. Centrality is measured in this study to identify key influencers in the network. Analyzes measured changes in centrality over time, specifically who shares the most information, out-degree, and who has the most incoming ties from others which is in-degree.
Betweenness Centrality	How often a specific node falls along the shortest path between two other nodes. (Borgatti et al., 2018)
Sentiment analysis	Sentiment analysis will be used to draw meaning from the text of the tweets. In this study, the positive and negative sentiments will be identified.
Clauset-Newman-Moore Algorithm.	A mathematical algorithm that assigns nodes to clusters (Hansen et al., 2020).
Harel-Koren Fast Multiscale Algorithm.	A force-directed layout that attempts to minimize edge crossings
Weak Ties.	Ties can either be weak or strong in a network. A large number of weak ties is positive because it allows networks to get

	<p>increased information from diverse resources (Rigby, 2012). Like face-to-face relationships, a person may have only a few close friends (strong ties), but they will have a more significant number of associates (weak ties). Strong ties may have more similarities making a group more homogeneous and less likely to receive a wide range of information (Borgatti et al., 2018). Weak ties provide information from heterogeneous groups that can give a person multiple perspectives (Borgatti et al., 2018).</p>
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### ***Research Question One***

The first research question aimed to identify descriptive content of the #scchat network. To answer the first research question of how school counseling professionals' (i.e., school counselors, school counselor educators, and district leaders over school counselors) use of Twitter changed over ten years when using the #scchat hashtag, downloaded tweets were analyzed. Quantitative metrics were calculated through NodeXL. These calculations identified different groups in the network, how they were clustered, density, and centralities (in-degree, out-out-degree, and betweenness) for individual nodes. The number of nodes and ties is also identified. Once the data was exported to Insights, the researcher looked at the Twitter user location, when they joined Twitter, and the days and times the network tweeted. The Social Media Research Foundation created Insights to make viewing and analyzing data easier. To complete a social network analysis, using NodeXL and Insights worked best. For the best visualization of the graphs to answer the first research question, the researcher used Insights and NodeXL.

The researcher used the Clauset-Newman-Moore algorithm to create group clusters to identify smaller groups (Hansen et al., 2020). The sample was visualized using Harel-Koren

graph layouts (Hansen et al., 2020). Clustering is critical for this study because it identifies different groups with closer ties and how they are connected to another cluster of nodes. The clustering coefficient aligns with a network's density. Although created for undirected graphs, it can be applied to directed graphs (Borgatti et al., 2018). Since the graphs in this study are directed, the clustering coefficient measures an individual node's cohesiveness and tendency to form groups. If the clustering coefficient is higher, so is the node's cohesiveness.

### ***Research Question Two***

Research question two aims to identify school counseling professionals using Twitter for advocacy for marginalized student populations. Merriam-Webster (2023) defines advocacy as “the act or process of supporting a cause or proposal.” Advocacy on social media can be tweeting in support of a movement, such as mental health awareness or stopping police violence toward Black people. People can advocate using hashtags, share links to articles, or post supporting proposed legislation. Furthermore, social media users can advocate for specific populations or causes by advocating against issues such as systemic racism. For this study, the researcher defines advocacy using the dictionary definition and applies it to the data.

To answer the second research question, quantitative content analysis was completed by looking at the words, hashtags, and sentiments used in the tweets. Downloaded tweets were analyzed using NodeXL and Insights. Insights calculated the frequency of each word and hashtag. It also determined if a word was categorized as having positive or negative sentiment. The identified content is individual terms specifically searched. These terms were as follows: advocacy, advocate, equity, racism, race, ethnicity, transgender, LGBTQIA+ (including other previously used acronyms), Black, Latinx (also includes Latino, Latina, and Hispanic), Asian, and Native American. Race and sexual and gender minority identities describe the targeted marginalized populations discussed in the literature of this study. Unfortunately, due to limited

resources, the researcher could not include individual ethnicities in the key words, but if a specific ethnic group was mentioned in the content, it was noted. The frequency and content of the tweets where the word was used were analyzed. The researcher also analyzed changes over time. The hashtags identified are the hashtags used with #scchat. Multiple hashtags can be used in one tweet, so every hashtag analyzed was used with #scchat. The hashtags were analyzed by frequency of use and changes in the hashtags over time. Lastly, Insights provided an interactive list representing positive and negative sentiment of tweets. The words within each sentiment were analyzed by looking at the content of the tweets to see, for example, if the word racism would be categorized as positive or negative sentiment.

The researcher chose these words based on the literature and sociopolitical issues impacting marginalized students. Since there is data from 2012, it was imperative to consider specific terms and how they changed over time. Current literature uses Latinx, but in 2012 that term may not have been used, for example.

## **Results**

This exploratory study used Social Network Analysis to learn about school counseling professionals' use of Twitter. The results section begins with general information regarding the #scchat Twitter data collected. The first research question is presented, and the results are reported at the network, group, and node levels, and tables and figures are provided. The following section includes content analysis for research question two, supported by tables and figures. A summary is provided for each analysis, and example tweets are provided. Some tweets include the user's name, and others do not. While this data was public data that did not require informed consent, specific usernames may not be used due to some of the content and recent Twitter attacks.

## Network Construction

#scchat Twitter data was downloaded via NodeXL Twitter search network 2.0. Twitter gave permission to collect more API data over a longer length of time upon application for a research designation. It allowed approved researchers to collect up to ten million tweets a month. Graph metrics were calculated in NodeXL and then exported to Insights. Data was collected through multiple search network imports. The nodes in this study are the individual Twitter users, and the ties are the relationships between them. Nodes represented individual, group, or organization users. For every data set, all duplicate ties were merged. The graphs for each data sample were directed and unweighted. Directed graphs visualize the direction of the tie. It identifies the type of relationship between two nodes and contains an arrow at the end of a tie. If there is only one arrow, then the relationship is one-sided. If an arrow is at each end of the tie, the relationship is two-way between two nodes. Unweighted describes the strength of the ties. In weighted graphs, ties have different thicknesses to visualize the strength of the connections between two nodes, and in unweighted graphs, the strength of the relationship is not displayed; it does not mean there were no differences in the relationship's strength, but the graph type does not illustrate it.

2012, 2016, and 2020 were chosen as the sample networks to analyze for this study. When data was collected for the entire timeline, NodeXL calculated centrality metrics for the whole data set. Therefore, there was no way to explore changes for each year, so data slices were collected for each year. The researchers downloaded network data from 2011. The network had 116 tweets, 60 nodes, and 43 unique edges. Since #scchat started in 2011, it did not represent a full year of data. Therefore 2012, the first full active year of #scchat, was most appropriate to represent the beginning of this study. The years 2016 and 2020 were the most appropriate



network years to represent the middle and the end of #scchat’s ten-year lifespan, and each had a four-year gap between them. Although date parameters were set for the data import, not every sample obtained tweets representing the entire year. 2012 collected full-year data, but 2016’s network data only captured tweets from July 21<sup>st</sup> to December 31<sup>st</sup>.

Similarly, the network data imported for 2020 only captured tweets from March 27<sup>th</sup> to December 31<sup>st</sup>. Since data slices were collected for different years, there was data from the missing months, but the researcher could not merge the network data obtained to complete the 2016 and 2020 data set. During data collection, access to Twitter API was revoked from all researchers, therefore limiting the ability to combine data using the tweet ID.

### **Research Question One**

The first research question was, *“How has school counseling professionals’ (i.e., school counselors, school counselor educators, district leaders over school counselors) use of Twitter changed over ten years when using the #scchat hashtag?”* The analyses calculated were group clusters, clustering coefficient, density, betweenness centrality, and in-degree and out-degree centrality for each data network sample. The results also identify user location, the tweet count by day and hour, and the time joined count by year and month.

### ***Network Level Findings***

The 2012 network data comprised 2,290 tweets, 1363 nodes, and 3309 unique ties. The network data from 2016 consisted of 4,891 tweets, 3,272 nodes, and 6,733 unique ties. The 2020 network data had 8,161 tweets, 4,919 nodes, and 11,290 unique ties. Table one displays the total number of tweets, nodes, ties, and the description of the ties for each data sample, including 2011. The tie descriptions are retweets, mentions in tweets, self-tweets, and mentions.

### **Table 1**

*#scchat Data by Sample Year*

Data set by year	Total Tweets	Nodes	Ties	Retweets	Mentions in Tweet	Self- Tweets	Mentions
2011	123	60	43	17	15	77	22
2012	2290	1363	3309	288	1026	266	850
A2016	4,891	3,272	6,733	856	2,765	410	862
2020	8,161	4919	11,290	291	4,864	712	1,347

*Note.* The 2011 data was included in this table even though it is not a sample year that was analyzed.

***Density***

The density value in a network ranges from zero to one, and the researcher compared the densities of each network (2012, 2016, 2020) to determine if a graph was dense. In 2012, the density of the graph was 0.0016. In 2016 the graph density was 0.0006, and in 2020 the graph density was 0.0004. When initially analyzing the 2012 density, it appeared as if the graph was less dense since the number was low, but with each sample year network, the density decreased. Therefore, the 2012 graph was the densest compared to the other two sample networks. Table two displays the density for each network data sample. None of the data samples had equal nodes or ties.

**Table 2***Density, by Sample Year*

Year	Density
2012	0.0016
2016	0.0006
2020	0.0004

## *Group Level Findings*

### *Group Clusters*

The first metric analyzed is group clustering. The Clauset-Newman-Moore algorithm is how each graph's nodes were clustered together. The graph layout is the Harel-Koren Fast Multiscale algorithm. Each group cluster is assigned a color, and the ties are gray. There are no groups with a single node. Each node is only represented once in the graph. The graph visualized the ties within and between clusters, which vary in number. It did not visualize the strength of the ties in the graph. The largest cluster is labeled group one; the second largest cluster is group two; the labels continue in order of the group size. There were 41 group clusters identified for 2012. The largest group had 407 nodes. The smallest group had two nodes. The 2016 network had 69 group clusters, with the largest cluster having 782 nodes. The smallest group had two nodes. The 2020 network had 142 group clusters. The largest group had 1270 nodes, and the smallest group had two nodes.

The change in group clusters and the number of nodes in the largest cluster of each network year increased over time. Table three shows the number of clusters and nodes in the largest cluster by year and the percentage increase of the growth. Graphs from NodeXL showed the group clusters for each network year. Each graph shows the changes in the number of group clusters and how many nodes are in each group. Figure one visualizes the group's cluster for 2012. Figures two and three visualize the group clusters for 2016 and 2020.

***Table 3***

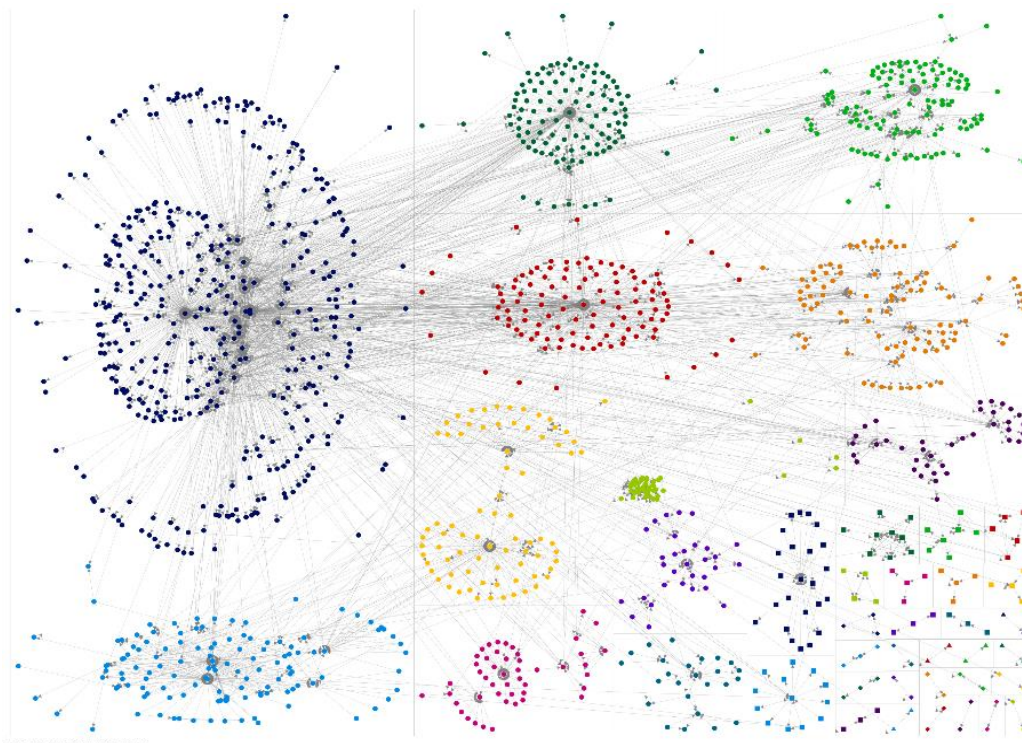
*Number of group clusters*

<i>Year</i>	<i>Number of Group Clusters</i>	<i>Number of Nodes in the largest cluster</i>
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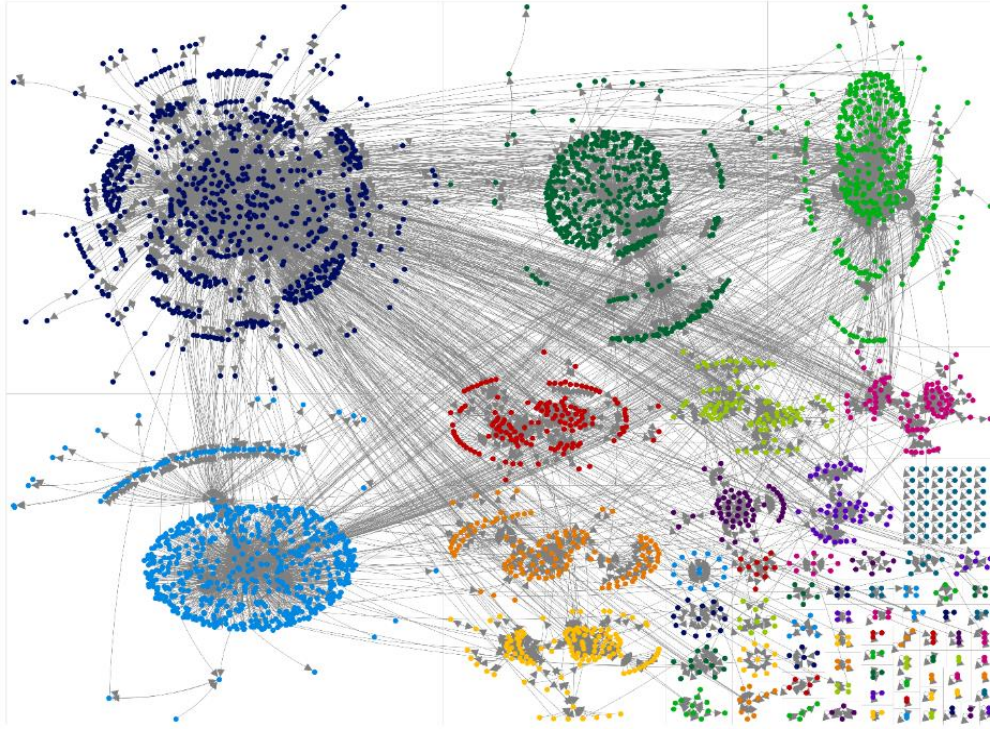
2012	41	407
2016	69	782
2020	142	1270

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**Figure 1***Group Clusters 2012*

*Note.* The figure is from NodeXL Graphs.

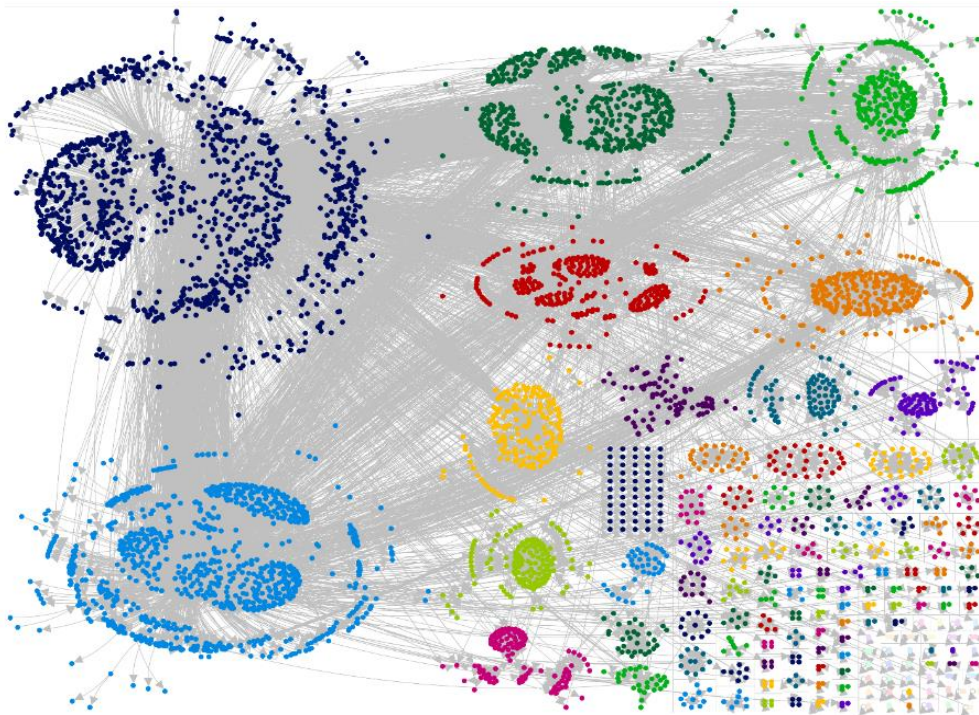
**Figure 2***Group Clusters 2016*



*Note.* The figure is from NodeXL Graphs.

### **Figure 3**

*Group Clusters 2020*



*Note.* The figure is from NodeXL Graphs.

### ***Node Level Findings***

#### ***Clustering Coefficient***

The clustering coefficient, like density, is measured between zero and one. While density is calculated for the entire network, the clustering coefficient is calculated within an individual group cluster. Each node has a clustering coefficient, but the average of each network year was used for this study. In 2012, the average clustering coefficient was 0.177; in 2016, it was 0.195; in 2020, it was 0.176. 2016 had the highest clustering coefficient, while 2012 and 2020 were approximately the same.

**Table 4**

*Average Clustering Coefficient by network year*

Year	Average Clustering Coefficient
2012	0.177
2016	0.195
2020	0.176

#### ***Centrality***

The next metric was the measurement of centrality. Centrality measures key users (i.e., nodes) in a network, and it is represented by in-degree, out-degree, and betweenness measurements in a directed graph.

**Betweenness Centrality.** In 2012, @dctrdarrell had the highest betweenness of 428,107.09 and was a member of the largest group cluster in the network. He had 2490



followers. The tenth largest user was @lindawassom at 95,883.95. They were a member of group cluster six and had 342 followers. Table 5 highlights the top ten users with the highest betweenness centrality within the network, which group cluster they were in, and how many followers they have. The follower count was the current number of followers. Researchers were unable to identify how many followers each user had during 2012. Figure four shows the top five users in the network within their group clusters separately. Their ties are highlighted in red to clarify each user and to identify their group cluster clearly.

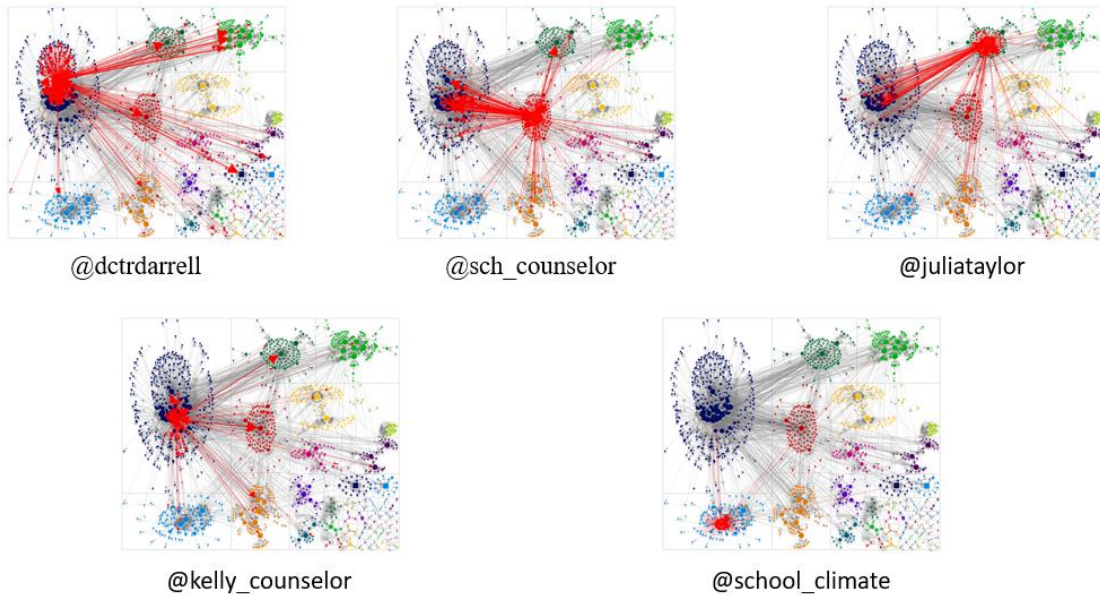
**Table 5**

*Top 10 Users with Highest Betweenness in 2012*

Top users	Betweenness	Group Cluster	Followers
@dctrdarrell	428,107.09	1	2490
@sch_counselor	385,559.69	5	7306
@juliataylor	279,550.08	3	4452
@Kelly_counselor	160,001.42	1	1183
@School_climate	135,776.95	2	800
@naviance	126,877.71	4	11,000
@marjieknuksen	114,000.75	7	27,000
@counselinggeek	101,000.77	1	6299
@ecmmason	96,166.40	1	8854
@lindawassom	95,883.95	6	342

**Figure 4**

*2012 Top 5 Betweenness Users Visualized*



*Note.* The figure is from NodeXL Graphs.

The user with the highest betweenness centrality in the 2016 network was @jeffhiseredu at 336544.180. They were a member of group cluster two and had 47,000 followers. The tenth highest betweenness was @rp31 which was in group cluster six. Their betweenness was 454029.419, and they had 1280 followers. Table six highlights the top ten users with the highest betweenness, group cluster, and number of followers. Figure five shows the top five users in the network within their group clusters. Their ties are highlighted in red to clarify each user and to clearly identify their group cluster.

**Table 6**

*Top 10 Users with Highest Betweenness in 2016*

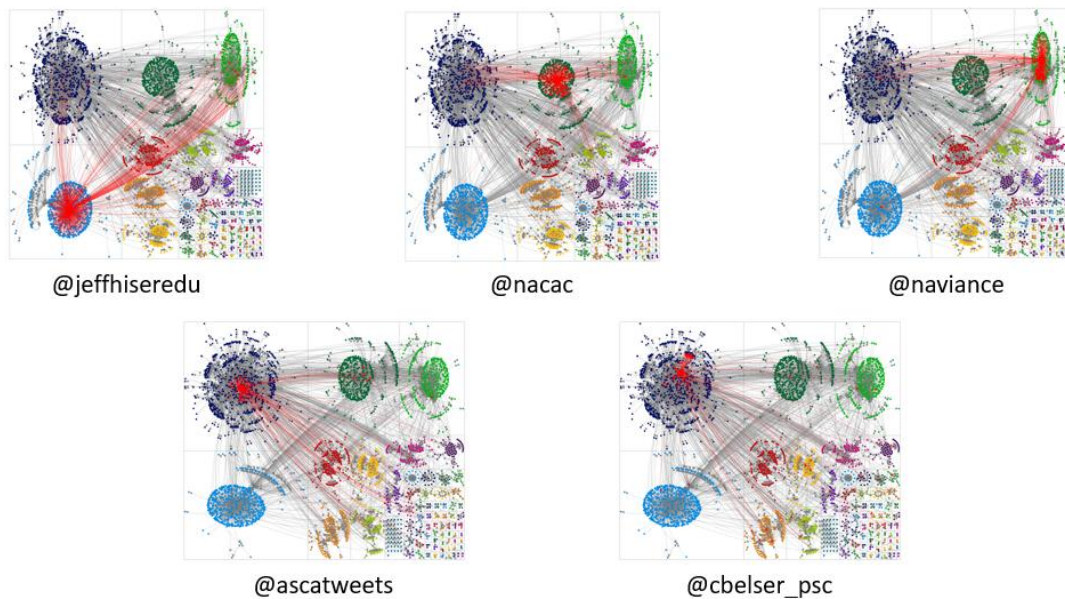
Top users	Betweenness	Group Cluster	Followers
@jeffhiseredu	3,336,544.180	2	47,000
@nacac	2,459,519.110	3	43,000



@naviance	1,472,021.033	4	11,000
@ascatweets	1,094,296.024	1	43,000
@cbelser_psc	900,632.947	1	2466
@spellmancann	881,809.695	1	3781
@rsabella	858,630.341	1	3994
@scholarbound	676,227.585	2	219
@counselinggeek	493,642.521	1	6289
@rp31	454,029.419	6	1280

**Figure 5**

*2016 Top 5 Betweenness Users Visualized*



*Note.* The figure is from NodeXL Insights Tables.

The user @nacac had the highest betweenness in the 2020 network. They were a member of the first group cluster and had 43,000 followers. @e\_goodmanscott had the tenth largest betweenness in the network at 1201715.207. They were part of group cluster three and had 1626 followers. Table seven identifies the top ten users with the highest betweenness, their group

cluster, and number of followers. Figure six displays the top five users in the 2020 network.

Their ties are highlighted in red to clarify each user and to clearly identify their group cluster.

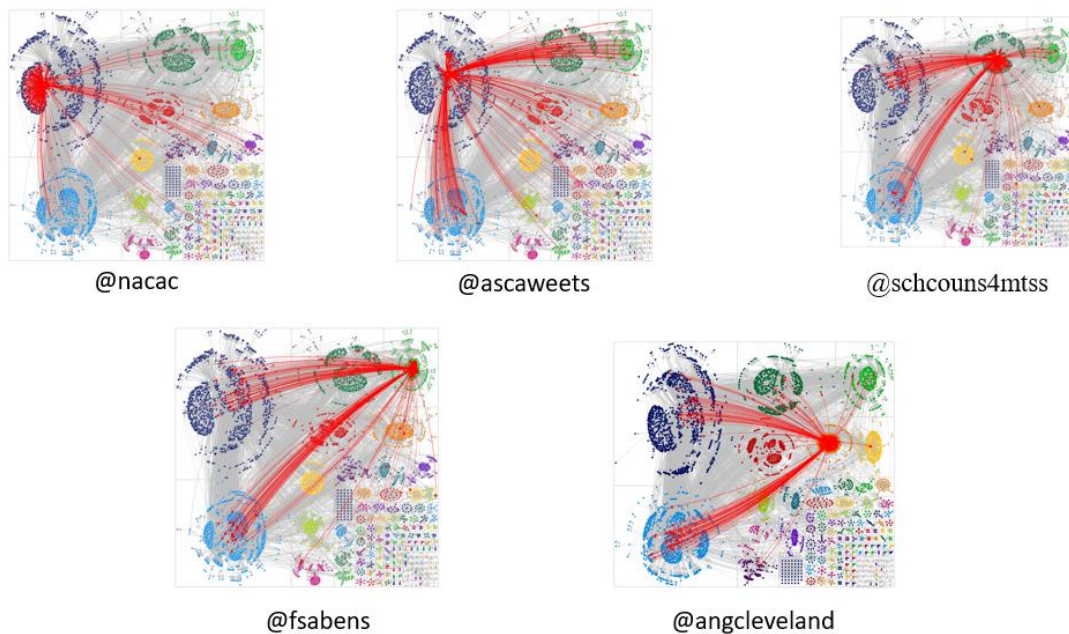
**Table 7**

*Top 10 Users with Highest Betweenness in 2020*

Top users	Betweenness	Group cluster	Followers
@nacac	4,031,652.952	1	43,000
@ascaweets	2,996,351.581	1	43,000
@schcouns4mtss	2,613,106.824	3	4749
@fsabens	2,327,675.053	4	3462
@angcleveland	1,971,178.816	6	3417
@spellmancann	1,931,117.767	2	3769
@karaieva24	1,753,501.200	1	1518
@schenhayes	1,495,014.309	2	3153
@always_oges	1,420,880.950	2	2551
@e_goodmanscott	1,201,715.207	3	1626

**Figure 6**

*2020 Top 5 Betweenness Users Visualized*



*Note.* The figure is from NodeXL Insights Tables.

The users with the top betweenness changed each network year. All the top users were not in the largest group clusters. In 2012, the highest betweenness measurement was 428,107.09. The highest betweenness measurement in 2016 was 3,336,544.180, much more than in 2012. For 2020, 4,031,652.952 was the highest betweenness number, a sizable increase from 2016. Every top user in 2016 had a betweenness higher than the highest user in 2012, and every top user in 2020 had a betweenness higher than one million. The higher the number, the more critical the user or node becomes to the network.

**In-degree and Out-degree Centrality.** In-degree and out-degree centrality represent the number of incoming ties (in-degree) and the number of outgoing ties (out-degree). The Twitter user with the highest in-degree centrality in 2012 was @sch\_counselor, with 158. The tenth highest in-degree centrality in the 2012 network was @kelly\_counselor, with 39. The top ten out-degree users for 2012 include some of the same top in-degree users, but the users are not the same. @dctrdarrell had the top out-degree centrality with 162. @sch\_counselor moved to the second highest out-degree centrality with 98. Table eight lists the top ten users for in-degree and out-degree in the 2012 network. Therefore, @sch\_counselor, one of the creators of #scchat, received the most inquiries for information, and although not as much, they also sought out information from other users.

### **Table 8**

#### *2012 Top 10 In-degree and Out-degree centralities*

Top Users	In-Degree Centrality	Top Users	Out-Degree Centrality
@sch_counselor	158	@dctrdarrell	162

@juliataaylor	152	@sch_counselor	98
@dctrdarrell	140	@kelly_counselor	77
@school_climate	90	@counselinggeek	57
@schoolclimate	73	@juliataaylor	50
@ncsca	55	@prof_polzin	42
@naviance	54	@pssca_counselor	40
@marjieknudsen	51	@mkelley723	35
@ascatsweets	43	@cscatsweets	31
@kelly_counselor	39	@msc Jennifer	31

For 2016, the user with the highest in-degree centrality was @jeffhiseredu, with 667. @usnewseducation had the tenth highest in-degree centrality with 80. For out-degree, @spellmancann had the most significant number of 96, and @mycasc was the tenth highest at 46. The only two users in the network in the top ten for in-degree or out-degree were @ascatsweets and @counselinggeek. Every other user had changed since 2012. The average number for each centrality of the top users in 2016 was more significant than the 2012 network. Table nine lists the top ten users for in-degree and out-degree in the 2016 network.

### Table 9

#### *2016 Top 10 In-degree and Out-degree centralities*

Top Users	In-degree Centrality	Top Users	Out-Degree Centrality
@jeffhiseredu	667	@spellmancann	96
@nacac	455	@cbelser_psc	78
@naviance	262	@scholarbound	76
@ascatsweets	164	@schenhayes	72
@edutopia	127	@naviance	61
@tech4teachers19	119	@ehordyskiluong	60

@rsabella	107	@hobsons	55
@nacacfacts	90	@rp31	55
@spellmancann	80	@counselinggeek	54
@usnewseducation	80	@mycasc	46

In the 2020 network, the user with the highest in-degree centrality was @nacac, with 518, and @schenhayes had the highest out-degree centrality, with 233. The tenth-highest in-degree was @spellmancann at 133, and the tenth-highest out-degree was @lmcneiley with 100. Like the previous network, in 2016, most of the top users changed. The remaining users from 2016 were @spellmancann, @schenhayes, @ascatsweets, and @nacac. The only user in the top ten for all three network years was @ascatsweets. The user is the national organization for school counselors. Each network represents changes in Twitter use for in-degree and out-degree centrality when using #scchat. Table 8 lists the top ten users for in-degree and out-degree in the 2020 network.

### Table 10

#### *2020 Top 10 In-degree and Out-degree centralities*

Top Users	In-degree Centrality	Top Users	Out-Degree Centrality
@nacac	518	@schenhayes	233
@ascatsweets	316	@angcleveland	192
@schcouns4mtss	315	@spellmancann	185
@fsabens	208	@always_oges	162
@paulharris917	197	@fsabens	135
@angcleveland	189	@karaieva24	131
@karaieva24	178	@schcouns4mtss	116
@danielleduarte	172	@lauraadamsowen	108

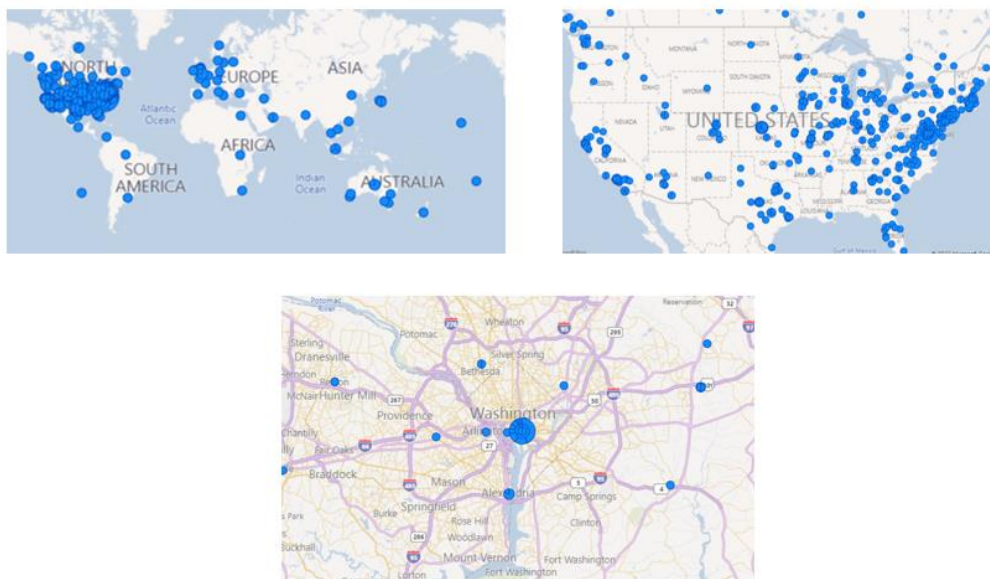
@e_goodmanscott	165	@counselorbdavis	103
@spellmancann	133	@lmcneiley	100

### ***Location***

Some Twitter users enable their locations, and others do not. The locations were as specific as a city; others used their state or country. Each circle represented a location by country, state, or city. Some locations may have had multiple users, so each blue circle was visually divided to represent individual users. Of the 1,363 users who used the #scchat hashtag in 2012, 1,017 had their location enabled, approximately 75%. The highest concentration of tweets was in the U.S. Within the U.S., Virginia had the most tweets, with 94, and only one user (node) was in that location. It did not list a specific city. Figure seven displays a world view of all locations, a picture of locations within the continental United States with parts of Canada and Mexico, and a visual of Virginia and surrounding areas for 2012. Due to how different users classified their location, there were other users in Virginia, but they used a specific city and were not counted in the Virginia total. The users in other parts of Virginia, Maryland, and Washington D.C. are visualized as smaller blue circles. Not showing is one user in Hawaii and one user in Alaska.

### **Figure 7**

*2012 User Locations by World, U.S., and Virginia*

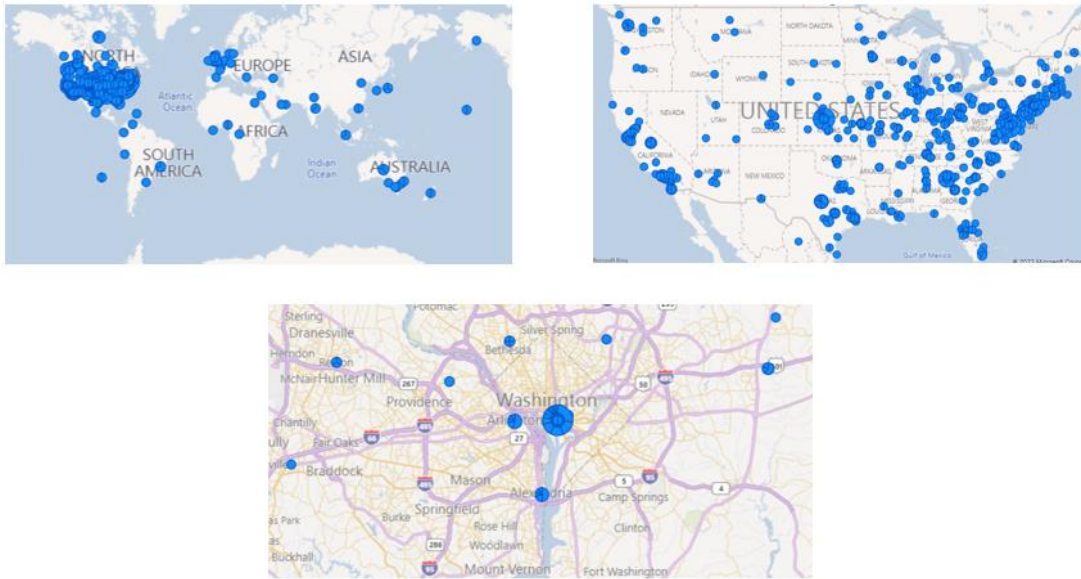


*Note.* The figure is from NodeXL Insights.

In 2016 approximately 77% or 2,516 users had their location-enabled out of 3,272 total users in the network. The highest concentration of tweets was in the U.S., and Washington, D.C. had the highest number, with 107. Those tweets were posted among forty-seven users. Figure eight displays a world view of all locations, locations within the continental United States with parts of Canada, and a visual of Washington D.C. and surrounding areas for 2016. There were no users from Alaska or Hawaii in the network.

### **Figure 8**

*2016 User Locations by World, U.S., and Washington D.C.*



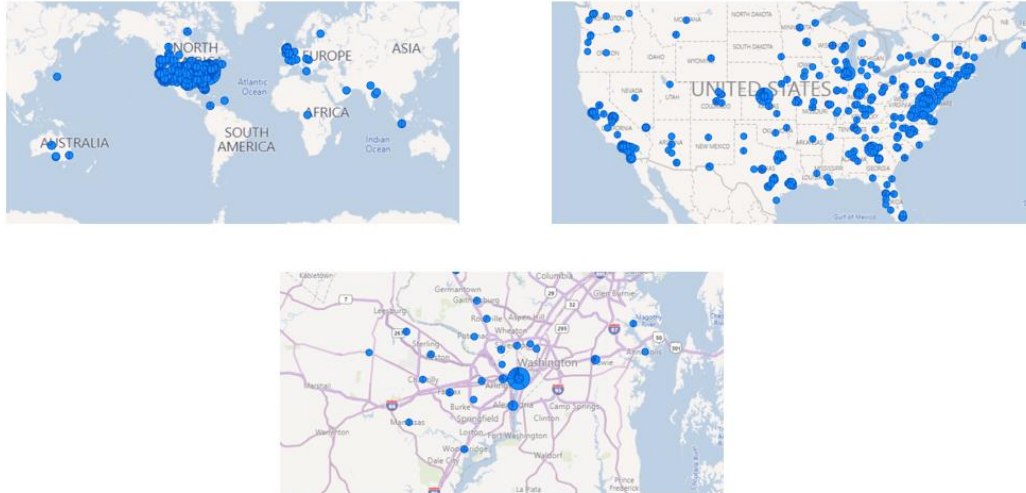
*Note.* The figure is from NodeXL Insights Tables.

Lastly, in 2020, 3656 users had their location-enabled out of 4919 total users, which was about 74%. The highest concentration remained in the U.S., and Washington, D.C. had the highest number of tweets, with 129 and 95 users who posted those tweets. Figure nine displays a world view of all locations, locations within the continental United States with parts of Canada, and a visual of Washington D.C. and surrounding areas for 2020. There was no representation of Alaska and Hawaii in this network.

### **Figure 9**

*2020 User Locations by World, U.S., and Washington D.C.*





*Note.* The figure is from NodeXL Insights Tables.

The number of users with location-enabled was consistently above 70% in each network year. Most users lived in the U.S., but in each network, there were users in other countries. Within the U.S., the northeast coast had the most concentration of users in each network. Although users that had their location set to Virginia were the highest in 2012, the positioning of the blue circle on the map is very close to Washington, D.C., the most elevated user location for 2016 and 2020. Table nine lists the top ten sites for each network year. Some places show a city, such as Pittsburgh, where one co-creator lived; others give a state, such as California. In the 2016 column of table nine, Calgary, AB, was listed twice. One of the locations was identified as Calgary, AB, and the other was Calgary, Alberta. For this study, none of the locations were combined, even if they were the same place, to precisely display the differences in how locations were named.

## **Table 11**

*Top 10 Locations with the Number of Tweets and Nodes*

2012			2016			2020		
Location	Tweets	Nodes	Location	Tweets	Nodes	Location	Tweets	Nodes
Virginia	94	1	DC	107	46	D.C.	129	95
Pittsburgh	70	1	New Orleans	64	8	Pittsburgh	124	14
Valparaiso, IN	53	1	Calgary, AB	58	5	Calgary, AB	123	8
Rhode Island	44	6	Pittsburgh	56	11	Hammond, IN	121	10
D.C.	43	33	Cincinnati	51	4	Virginia	120	42
NYC	35	20	Sarnia, ON	51	1	Atlanta, GA	118	48
Fredonia, WI	32	1	Arlington, VA	50	12	New Jersey	102	33
Lake Tahoe	32	1	Calgary, AB	48	4	Southern IL	100	2
Charlottesville	30	3	California	47	11	Glassboro, NJ	94	3
S. Carolina	26	3	New York City	44	36	Charlottesville, VA	90	30

***Tweet Count by Day and Hour***

The subsequent analysis to answer research question one was the tweet count by day and hour. Insights created a table providing the number of tweets by day and hour of the day. The time was displayed in military time. The table from the 2012 network showed the number of tweets decreased between 2:00 AM and 1:00 PM eastern standard time. Then the number of tweets started to increase again at 2:00 PM. The tweets by day and hour in 2016 decreased between 2:00 AM and 11:00 AM eastern standard time. Like the networks in 2012 and 2016, 2020 also shows decreased tweets during regular sleep hours. The numbers were lower between 4:00 AM and 11:00 AM eastern standard time. In each network, 1:00 AM to 2:00 AM had the most significant number of tweets, but the day of the week differed. In 2012, Wednesday had the

greatest number of tweets, with 145. The years 2016 and 2020 each had Thursdays during the same time, with the most tweets at 156 and 281, respectively. Figures 10, 11, and 12 illustrate a complete visual of each network.

### Figure 10

#### *2012 Tweet Count by Day and Hour*

Day	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	Total
Sun	5	10	7	6	9	5	3			1	1	6	8	8	15	20	29	21	7	10	10	14	22	15	<b>232</b>
Mon	21	18	19	15	12	2	1	1	1	1	5	6	16	11	22	27	19	21	28	18	17	13	12	19	<b>325</b>
Tue	25	30	14	27	14	6	4	1	2	5	8	8	16	21	24	20	17	25	13	17	25	28	21	24	<b>395</b>
Wed	89	145	33	37	19	5	3	1	2	3	3	9	8	10	20	25	10	14	13	16	15	12	14	16	<b>522</b>
Thu	20	27	39	17	4	6	1			2	1	13	15	14	16	12	15	13	12	9	14	22	16	18	<b>306</b>
Fri	15	49	11	20	1		3	2	3		2	4	11	11	15	18	14	12	11	12	13	20	22	17	<b>286</b>
Sat	19	12	16	9	12	3	1		1		6	9	9	13	15	20	11	16	12	8	10	9	7	6	<b>224</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>194</b>	<b>291</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>2,290</b>

*Note.* The figure is from NodeXL Insights Tables.

### Figure 11

#### *2016 Tweet Count by Day and Hour*

Day	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	Total
Sun	31	20	19	12	7	12	3	7	2	2	9	12	16	18	18	20	27	23	16	32	33	25	28	25	<b>417</b>
Mon	36	34	26	31	10	8	5	1		4	4	21	25	42	29	34	41	46	34	43	40	34	40	39	<b>627</b>
Tue	45	48	41	33	15	1	4		3	4	9	22	25	31	35	42	43	39	38	35	49	51	51	49	<b>713</b>
Wed	67	55	56	26	14	10	6	5	2	10	23	30	30	64	52	53	55	41	47	46	44	33	55	63	<b>887</b>
Thu	128	156	44	33	19	7	4	6	5	4	11	19	32	25	40	38	37	42	38	42	48	46	29	41	<b>894</b>
Fri	43	75	59	33	16	6	3	3	4	18	9	14	30	47	54	57	53	37	46	34	43	30	28	44	<b>786</b>
Sat	43	44	29	17	16	17	3	6	1	5	3	22	28	31	31	58	30	26	33	22	26	28	21	27	<b>567</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>393</b>	<b>432</b>	<b>274</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>186</b>	<b>258</b>	<b>259</b>	<b>302</b>	<b>286</b>	<b>254</b>	<b>252</b>	<b>254</b>	<b>283</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>252</b>	<b>288</b>	<b>4,891</b>

*Note.* The figure is from NodeXL Insights Tables.

### Figure 12

#### *2020 Tweet Count by Day and Hour*

Day	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	Total
Sun	48	32	30	24	10	10	3	3	11	5	9	14	19	30	35	43	38	25	25	37	27	22	31	32	<b>563</b>
Mon	38	24	27	24	9	9	7	2	1	6	8	25	63	71	86	74	51	78	78	77	79	82	61	63	<b>1,043</b>
Tue	77	79	49	57	26	11	4	9	3	5	29	28	65	77	81	87	100	69	67	76	73	81	81	55	<b>1,289</b>
Wed	68	56	49	37	31	19	15	6	11	15	17	36	77	69	84	184	138	86	96	91	75	90	99	81	<b>1,530</b>
Thu	192	281	102	59	44	13	15	11	6	11	20	52	92	88	97	79	88	81	64	68	68	56	72	72	<b>1,731</b>
Fri	86	66	55	52	47	11	11	5	12	12	24	49	67	84	72	83	81	60	69	95	86	72	56	50	<b>1,305</b>
Sat	46	40	55	31	19	3	9	3	4	4	9	20	36	40	32	40	47	46	38	35	40	43	34	26	<b>700</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>555</b>	<b>578</b>	<b>367</b>	<b>284</b>	<b>186</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>224</b>	<b>419</b>	<b>459</b>	<b>487</b>	<b>590</b>	<b>543</b>	<b>445</b>	<b>437</b>	<b>479</b>	<b>448</b>	<b>446</b>	<b>434</b>	<b>379</b>	<b>8,161</b>

*Note.* The figure is from NodeXL Insights Tables.

### *User Time Joined*

The year that users joined Twitter ranges from 2006-2020. The last year reported is the year of the data sample (i.e., 2012, 2016, and 2020). Also, each sample does not always represent different users. For example, if a user joined Twitter in August of 2007 in the 2012 network, that same user may have been included in 2016's network report of August 2007. If that user engaged in using #scchat within both 2012 and 2016, they could have been included in the 2020 network.

**2012.** In 2012, users joined Twitter from 2007-2012. Therefore, Twitter users from 2007-2010 were active before #scchat started as a hashtag. The year with the most users joining was 2009; April had the most, with 47 total users. The year with the smallest number was 2007, with four. The month with the largest total number of users who joined Twitter in the 2012 network was March, with 101. Figure 13 shows a table created in NodeXL Insights with the time joined in the 2012 network.

### **Figure 13**

*2012 User Time Joined by Month and Year*

Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
2007			1			1		1	1				4
2008		1	3	6	3	6	3	7	8	9	8	12	66
2009	18	20	44	47	26	29	24	12	9	16	8	7	260
2010	7	16	7	9	10	11	14	12	14	16	12	10	138
2011	22	15	22	17	19	24	20	24	21	35	18	22	259
2012	26	16	24	17	18	29	30	26	22	18	10	4	240
<b>Total</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>967</b>

*Note.* The figure is from NodeXL Insights Tables.

**2016.** The network users from 2016 joined Twitter from 2007-2016. The number of users that joined Twitter before #scchat was created increased each year between 2007 and 2010. The year with the most users was 2016, with 372. The month that had the most users was August, at 327. Unlike 2012, the 2016 network had at least one user who joined Twitter every month of the year, but 2007 still had the lowest number of the network with 23 users. Figure 14 shows a table of the users who joined Twitter in the 2016 network NodeXL Insights created.

#### Figure 14

##### *2016 User Time Joined by Month and Year*

Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
2007	1	2	1	3	1	2	2	3	2	2	2	2	23
2008	3	3	2	4	4	6	4	7	5	7	7	19	71
2009	30	29	52	59	42	51	35	21	14	12	9	9	363
2010	15	18	13	12	12	14	10	17	15	14	8	9	157
2011	15	20	27	31	18	19	35	32	25	28	27	19	296
2012	35	22	33	23	19	32	43	42	28	35	25	22	359
2013	36	24	24	16	18	33	32	41	22	22	33	21	322
2014	28	30	23	31	20	34	42	43	34	31	18	15	349
2015	13	27	15	23	24	19	36	49	46	31	23	16	322
2016	26	24	26	27	25	33	38	72	55	27	14	5	372
<b>Total</b>	<b>202</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>229</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>243</b>	<b>277</b>	<b>327</b>	<b>246</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>2,634</b>

*Note.* The figure is from NodeXL Insights Tables.

**2020.** The data network from 2020 had users who joined Twitter range from 2007-2020. The year with the most users was 2009, with 386; August was the most significant month that year, with 472 users who joined Twitter. Once again, the number of users that joined Twitter before the #scchat hashtag started grew in 2016. During 2009-2019, each month had double-digit numbers of users ranging from 10-67. November and December 2020 numbers dropped, reporting four and three users during those months. Figure 15 displays a table of when users joined Twitter that NodeXL Insights created.

**Figure 15**

*2020 User Time Joined by Month and Year*

Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
2007	2		6	2	2	2		3	2	1		1	<b>21</b>
2008	3	3	7	3	4	8	9	10	7	12	7	13	<b>86</b>
2009	23	30	51	67	36	39	46	32	10	14	23	15	<b>386</b>
2010	18	13	15	16	19	14	19	15	16	18	17	12	<b>192</b>
2011	19	19	36	21	17	23	37	40	26	25	17	17	<b>297</b>
2012	24	12	26	30	25	21	31	38	28	21	29	18	<b>303</b>
2013	18	35	15	24	13	23	29	30	24	20	25	9	<b>265</b>
2014	17	25	21	16	27	23	29	37	40	17	19	12	<b>283</b>
2015	14	24	18	18	16	25	34	42	37	33	13	17	<b>291</b>
2016	32	20	13	22	20	27	31	51	30	17	17	15	<b>295</b>
2017	20	23	9	16	10	20	28	48	27	25	17	13	<b>256</b>
2018	17	21	11	9	16	16	31	39	32	28	16	16	<b>252</b>
2019	15	17	19	8	18	33	32	43	29	28	16	19	<b>277</b>
2020	26	22	55	41	21	34	19	44	14	11	4	3	<b>294</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>248</b>	<b>264</b>	<b>302</b>	<b>293</b>	<b>244</b>	<b>308</b>	<b>375</b>	<b>472</b>	<b>322</b>	<b>270</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>3,498</b>

*Note.* The figure is from NodeXL Insights Tables.

As the use of #scchat increased with each network year, the number of users increased too. The data from each figure above revealed that school counseling professionals were active

on Twitter before #scchat's creation. August was a popular month when users joined Twitter, typically when a new school year started. Although July did not contain the highest number of users, it is when the ASCA conference occurs in the summer. It is a time when #scchat may have been widely used as school counselors from all over the U.S. come together.

## **Research Question 2**

Research question two was *“how has school counseling professionals’ (i.e., school counselors, school counselor educators, district leaders over school counselors) advocacy for marginalized populations changed over time when using Twitter?”* Content analysis of hashtags, words, and sentiment were identified to answer this question. The same data network samples were used to answer the second research question. They were the years 2012, 2016, and 2020. The content terms advocacy, advocate, equity, ethnicity, race, racism, transgender, LGBTQIA+, Black, Latinx, Asian, and Native American were organized in the results by hashtags, words, and sentiment. The results were organized chronologically by network year within those three categories.

### ***Hashtags***

When users tweet, they can use more than one hashtag. Since #scchat is the primary hashtag for this study, it was included in every tweet. Therefore unless #scchat was used by itself, all other tweets contain multiple hashtags. Like #scchat, those hashtags allow people to follow specific topics. For example, on February 6, 2012, @juliataylor tweeted, “Don’t forget to thank a school counselor today! Happy National School Counseling Week! #scchat #edchat #cpchat.” She used three different hashtags in that tweet.

**2012.** In the 2012 network, there were 379 hashtags identified. Figure 16 is a word cloud image of the top hashtags used in 2012. The larger the hashtag size in the cloud, the more a hashtag was used. The # sign was not used in these visuals, but the Insights tool confirmed the







*Note.* The figure is from NodeXL Insights. The top word cloud is the hashtags used over twenty-five times, and the bottom is the hashtags used more than one hundred times.

The search terms were searched for the content analysis as hashtags, so they are discussed as topics and appear in tweets using # before the word. Few tweets were explicitly focused on advocacy for marginalized student populations. Meaning few tweets met the definition of advocacy specifically for this study. Tweets that met the criteria mostly referred to advocacy for the school counseling profession. As a hashtag, advocacy was used twice. On March 14, 2012, @DctrDarrell tweeted, “Just got schooled at a presentation by Amanda from @ASCAtweets on their latest legislative #advocacy efforts for #schoolcounselors. #scchat.” That tweet was retweeted two times by other users. On August 13, 2012, @mnewmansc tweeted, “Will get to hear @flipflippin tomorrow!! We think we’re good now, but we’re about to be CHAMPIONS!! #MyKindOfSpeaker #advocacy.” Although those tweets contain the word advocacy as a hashtag, they do not specifically mention marginalized students. Advocate was neither used as a hashtag nor equity, ethnicity, race, or racism.

The hashtag #LGBT was used twenty times. All the tweets containing the hashtag were tweeted or retweeted by @dctrdarrell surrounding awareness and resources. @schoolclimate tweeted, “From ‘Born This Way’ to ‘Move This Way’- [bit.ly/zurjmk](http://bit.ly/zurjmk) @AnneCollier @ladygaga #scchat #edchat #students #sel” on March 6<sup>th</sup>. The tweet included a link to an article written by Anne Collier regarding genderfluidity in children and their parents’ ability to discuss it anonymously for safety. LGBTQ and LGBTQIA were used one and two times. Like #LGBT, the tweets were posted by @dctrdarrell or mentioned him. Transgender did not appear as a hashtag, and no tweets contained Black, Latinx, Asian, or Native American.

**2016.** In the 2016 network, there were 811 hashtags used. The #scchat data collected for 2016 represents about six months of the year. Most hashtags were used less than twenty-five times, and like in 2012, a significant number were only used once. Figure 18 shows the top hashtags used in the network. Fifteen hashtags occurred more than a hundred times. The second highest used hashtag was #sccrowd (school counselor crowd), used 756 times. In November 2016, @jeffhiseredu used #scchat, #sccrowd, and #hscchat (high school counseling chat) in his retweet of another user. The original tweet stated, “Meet with struggling students before problems begin and build a relationship with them. Be proactive. #edchat.” The #edchat hashtag’s use increased from 2012 but was bumped to the third-highest hashtag and was used 646 times in the 2016 network. Figure 19 illustrates the hashtags used more than twenty-five and one hundred times in the 2016 network.

## **Figure 18**

### *2016 Hashtags*





Equity was used eight times, and racism was used four as a hashtag. Neither of these hashtags was used in the 2012 network. An example of a tweet that contained #equity by @dhpeabody stated, “Excellence without #inclusion is segregation. Excellence without #equity is elitism. – Gary R. Howard #HoCoCPro #scchat #edchat.” A Black male counselor educator tweet that included #racism stated, “Standardizing #Whiteness: the Essential #Racism of Standardized Testing...” Two hashtags not included for content analysis were #raceandequity and #scraceandequity. The same user, who identified as a Black school counselor, used both. Ethnicity, Race, Black, Asian, and Native American were not used as hashtags in the 2016 data set. Latino was used three times, while Latina, Latinx, and Hispanic were not used. The hashtag described all students that identify as Latino.

Another hashtag identified was #BlackLivesMatter and the shorter version #BLM. The full hashtag was used two times, and #BLM once. Inside Higher Ed, an organization focusing on higher education, used #BLM when discussing a comment made by someone at the NACAC conference that said all lives mater.

LGBT was used as a hashtag three times by the same user. One tweet by @schenhayes referred to a report by the Human Rights Watch group that discussed discrimination against LGBT youth in schools. Another hashtag did not include the content word but appeared to be about support for the population. The ally week hashtag supported those in the LGBTQIA+ community, and those tweets focused on awareness and how to be an ally. The language used in the tweets aligned with the content.

**2020.** The 2020 network’s total number of hashtags was a total of 1,453 hashtags. Around 325 of those hashtags were only used once. The use of #edchat decreased. The #edchat hashtag was used less in 2020 than it was in 2012 as well, but it was still the third most-used

hashtag. Figure 20 visualizes the most used hashtags in the 2020 network using a word cloud. The second most used hashtag in 2020 was #antiracistssc (i.e., antiracist school counselor/counseling). It was a hashtag created during the summer of 2020 by a coalition of school counselors and school counselor educators. When discussing the hashtags in 2020, it is imperative to acknowledge that the Twitter data collected began in March when Covid-19 shut down schools and students moved to remote learning. Also, the summer of 2020 included protests and activism surrounding racism and the murders of unarmed Black people.

Like 2012 and 2016, #advocacy was used twice by the same user in 2020. The school counselor user tweeted, “‘Acknowledge that events in the community are not separate from the context of school.’ Dr. Damien Sweeney #EquityDiversityInclusion #RacebasedStressandTrauma #ASCAU #HaveTheConversation #SchoolCounselors #scchat #socialjustice #advocacy.” Another user’s tweet included #advocate, and that hashtag appeared once. The use of #equity as a hashtag increased in 2020 and was used twenty-four times. There were other hashtags that included the term equity, like #everyconversationisaboutequity and #educationalequity. These hashtags were not included in the total. Like equity, #racism was used as a hashtag six times, and it was included in hashtags such as #interruptingracism, #interruptingracismbook, #antiracism, #edantiracism, #vicariousracism, and #racisminschools. The content of these tweets surrounds racism in education and a book written by two practicing school counselors named *Interrupting Racism*. Neither race nor ethnicity showed up as a hashtag. Black was not a stand-alone hashtag, but it appeared in twenty-three other hashtags. Others were #Blacklivesmatter, #blackmentalhealth, #blacktranslivesmatter, #blackintheivory, and #asiansforblacklives. The same occurred with Latinx. It, or the other related terms, were not stand-alone hashtags. The other hashtags were #latinxheritagemonth and

#Hispanicheritagemoth. Asian, as mentioned above, was used in hashtags like #asians4blacklives, and it was part of the #asianamerican hashtag. Each hashtag was only used one time. Native American was not included in any hashtags in the 2016 network.

Transgender did not show up as a hashtag. LGBTQIA, or another form of the acronym, showed up four times. Two of the tweets were posted by @DctrDarrell and referenced supporting students during Covid-19. Another tweet posted by @karaieva24 included #LGBTQIA and congratulated a student who defended their dissertation, which was a study about working with LGBTQ youth.

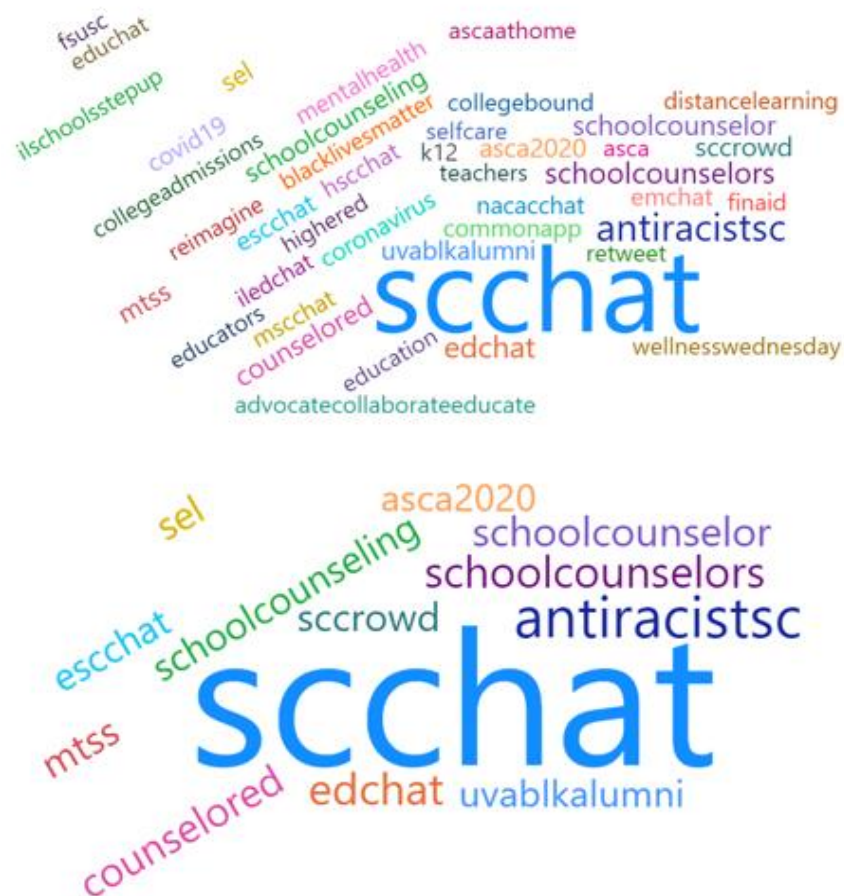
The top 25 most-used hashtags in 2020 include topics surrounding college, academics, and mental health topics. They were also school counselor-focused. A new hashtag, #counselored, appeared in 2020 for counselor education/educators. It was used more than a hundred times, and more school counselor educators were becoming more involved with the school counseling community by using #scchat. Figure 21 illustrates the hashtags used over twenty-five and a hundred times in 2020.

## **Figure 20**

*2020 hashtags*







*Note.* The figure is from NodeXL Insights. The top word cloud is the hashtags used more than twenty-five times, and the bottom is the hashtags used more than one hundred times.

**Summary.** The results regarding hashtags showed changes in the number of hashtags used in the school counseling profession. More hashtags were used, and they aligned with the other network data. For example, in 2016, much of the data included college and career topics. Therefore, it is not abnormal to see that many of the most used hashtags surround college content. Similarly, 2020's data included more social-emotional language, which seems to connect to topics surrounding Covid-19 and mental health. Regarding the content and identified terms, LGBTQIA was used twenty-three times in 2012, and although the hashtag's use decreased

significantly in 2016 and 2020, it was used at least once every network year. The only other term that appeared in each network year was #advocacy. #Equity and #racism grew over time, increasing each year. Five terms, ethnicity, transgender, Black, Asian, and Native American, were not used in any network years as a hashtag.

### **Words**

Unlike hashtags, the words identified were based on the content of the tweets and not specific topics. They can also include user Twitter handles when counting the most used words in the sample years. Still, for this study, Twitter handles were not incorporated into the word content analysis. The words, including the identified content terms, were reported in this section of the results. Due to the large amount of data, the researcher did not analyze every word.

**2012.** The most used word in the 2012 network was school at 463 times. Due to NodeXL including hashtags and Twitter usernames as words, they appear in the data, so #scchat shows up as the most used word, but since it is a hashtag, it is not identified as the most used word in this study. The word school, often paired with the word counselor, showed up 170 times. Meaning that less than half the uses of school were referring to school counselors. College appeared as the second most used word at 202. User @juliataylor, a counselor educator, tweeted, “The Truth About Parent Involvement in the College Admissions Process...” It included a link to the article she referred to in her tweet. Figure 22 highlights the words used more than a hundred and two hundred times in the 2012 network.

### **Figure 22**

*2012 Words Used More Than 100 and 200 Times*



*Note.* The figure is from NodeXL Insights. The top word cloud is the words used more than 100 times.

The word advocacy appeared fourteen times in the 2012 network. The tweets referred to advocacy, like the #advocacy hashtag in the 2012 network, which discussed advocating for the school counseling profession and student ratios. One user, @mnewmansc, said, “The principal and counselor should serve as role models of leadership, advocacy, & agents of change, w/ students being our MAIN goal. #scchat.” It was an example of a tweet that focused on students but referred to advocating for students in general. The word advocate appeared in seventeen tweets. The Colorado School Counselor Association (CSCA), @CSCAtweets, said, “@jamievol, we loved your keynote! Practical, relevant, and hilarious! #ASCA12 #scchat thank you for being an advocate!” Equity and racism did not appear as words in any tweets in the 2012 network.

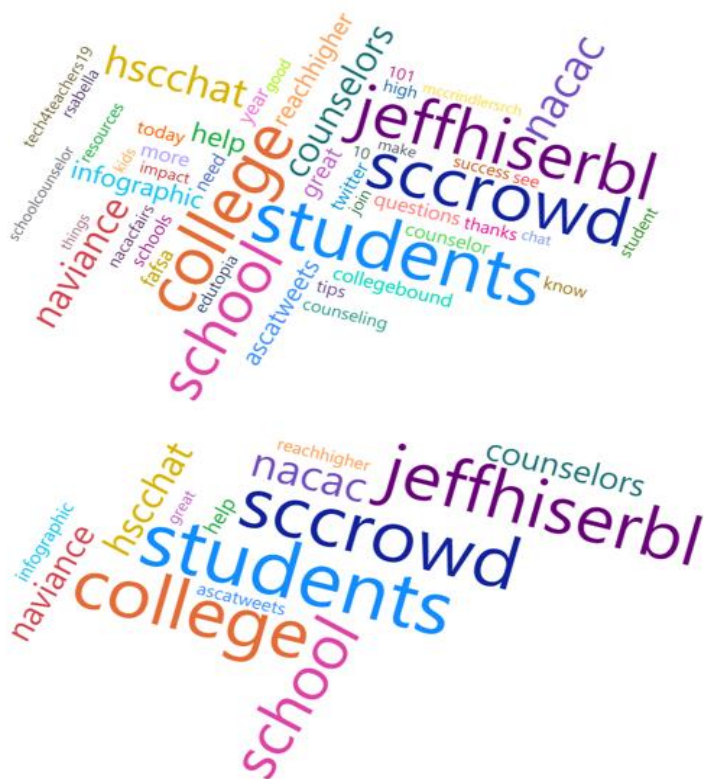
LGBTQIA+ terms appeared twenty-eight times in the 2012 network. LGBT appeared twenty-four times, and LGBTQ appeared four. Most tweets were tied to @dctrdarrell, but the organization @GLSEN was also mentioned. A tweet by @juliavtaylor said, “Talking about Suicide and LGBT Populations. An informative guide from @GLSEN...” Like the hashtag results for 2012, the same people use LGBTQIA+ or an earlier version of the acronym. The word transgender did not appear in any tweets.

The word race appeared three times. Not every tweet referred to race as the construct related to skin color. One tweet used the term when talking about a rat race. Black was used four times, but not all tweets referred to it as a race. One tweet was talking about black Friday shopping. Latino appeared in seven tweets. Latinx, Latina, or Hispanic did not appear in any tweets. The tweets surrounded the topic of college. For example, “Great job, @VCU RT @EdTrust: Colleges are producing better results for Black, Latino students...” Unfortunately, the words Asian and Native American were not mentioned.

**2016.** Students was the word most used in the 2016 network. It was used 848 times. An example tweet created by @rp31 said, “#osca16 #scchat RT @amanda\_carrol: Creating a failure proof world isn’t building resiliency in our students.” Other tweets that contained the word students also included college and career language. Some of the other most used words include college, NACAC, Naviance, Reach Higher, FAFSA, and admissions. For example, @Naviance tweeted, “5 smart reasons to consider a #gapyear before college money.us/2Bjhynl via @money by @kmoppelt #scchat #hechat #edchat.” The tweet included the college, mentions of other users, and uses four hashtags, including #scchat and #edchat. Figure 22 visualizes the words used over a hundred and two hundred times in a word cloud. Some of the words pictured were also hashtags.

**Figure 23**

*2016 Words Used More Than 100 and 200 Times*



*Note.* The figure is from NodeXL Insights. The top word cloud is the words used more than 100 times.

The use of the word advocacy occurred fourteen times in 2016. These tweets referred to advocacy when discussing professional advocacy for the profession. One tweet by @CounselorSaraW said, “Great advocacy article! High five @tconway1004 & @NJSCA #sccchat, Who are you calling a guidance counselor?” It included a graphic and link for an article. User @counselorup talked about how school counselors can use their advisory council as an advocacy tool. None of the tweets that contained the word advocacy mentioned advocating for marginalized students. Advocate was used thirty times, and advocates plural was used twice. The

tweets containing the phrase advocate had minimal content focused on advocating for students. A tweet by @SSpellmanCann said, “School Counsellors... Now more than ever, it will be important to be a strong advocate for our most vulnerable students #scchat #sccrowd.” It was one of the few tweets directed toward students.

The word equity appeared thirteen times. A former school counselor @DanielleRDuarte quoted a speaker who said, “I believe in equity, local control, & continuous improvement driven by collaboration.” She also quoted another speaker in a tweet that contained the word equity. That tweet said, “We need to make equity the North Star of our work.” Another user, @alaina\_schrader, tweeted, “Third-grade Ss at @Avonworthschool learn the difference between equality and equity. Students get what they need to be successful #scchat. This user does not identify as a school counselor.

Racism was used twelve times. A practicing school counselor tweeted, “Resources for Discussing Police Violence, Race, and Racism with Students... via @educationweek #scchat #mhchat.” The tweet included the title and link to a blog. Another school counselor posted an article from the Washington post in August of 2016 about private school teens who had a debate on Instagram regarding the n-word. She stated that was why private school teens need education on race and racism. This same school counselor shared another article about oppression, and a quote from that tweet was, “racism exists in schools.” Other users’ tweets appeared to be answers to questions from a live #scchat that occurred on November 2, 2016. Many tweets with the word racism also had the word race in them.

The word race itself only showed up four times. Words that describe race, Black, Latinx, Asian, Native American, were identified. Black was used sixteen times. One tweet contained black as a person’s last name, and another used the term black swan. All other tweets referred to

Black as it pertains to race. Latino was used seven times. A tweet by @NACAC tweeted about engaging Latino students, but the other tweets shared stories of Latino students being harassed or discriminated against. One tweet reported about middle school students in Michigan who chanted “build the wall” while their Latino peers cried. Latinx, Latina, or Hispanic were not used. Asian nor Native Americans appeared in the 2016 network data.

Regarding sexual and gender minorities, LGBTQ was used nine times and LGBT seven times. Current counselor educator @mattjbeck tweeted an article about a college student who was gay and stopped hiding behind a mask. The quoted tweet said, “Leading by example and strengthening LGBTQ scholar-athletes! @TheIowaHawkeyes #scchat.” An account representing GLSEN Day of Silence tweeted a list of LGBTQ books and encouraged people to diversify their reading lists. Many tweets containing LGBTQ and LGBT were tweets, retweets, or mentions by @mattjbeck. The word gay appeared three times. Neither the words lesbian, bisexual, transgender, or queer were used in the 2016 data set.

**2020.** The most frequently used word in the 2020 network was school, which was used 1,992 times. Students were the second most used word at 1,207, approximately a 42% increase in frequency from 2016. Counselors (847) and counseling (610), mostly paired with the word school, were the third and fourth highest-used words. A tweet from @KyleHirsch23 says, “Antiracist school counseling means your students never have to doubt that you are a trusted ally. They know this because you make it abundantly clear every day. #antiracistSC #counselored #scchat.” This was an example of tweet content that included a few of the most frequently used words. Figure 23 illustrates the words used more than one hundred and two hundred times in the 2016 network.

## Figure 24





systemic change are not enough. It needs to be explicit. It needs to be named. There are SCs who don't make the connection to anti-racist work. #scchat.” The tweet received twenty-seven RTs, 123 likes and was quoted with an RT five times. The Georgia School Counselor Association's (GSCA) Twitter account @WeAreGSCA posted, “Listening to the @ASCAtweets Virtual Town Hall about Leadership and Advocacy to Address Racism...” A tweet that included the term advocate said, “As SCs & SCEs, we have an ethical imperative to advocate for our students, families, schools, and communities. Shouldn't our professional organization @ASCAtweets be doing the same?” A counselor educator tweeted it. Similar to 2012 and 2016, there were tweets about advocating for the school counseling profession, but in 2020's network data, more of the tweets were about advocacy for students, specifically regarding race and LGBTQIA+ populations.

Equity appeared 116 times in the 2020 network data. One tweet by a counselor educator promoted @acacchild's (Association of Children and Adolescent Counseling) call for articles for their journal. The topic was research on race, equity, and marginalization of children and adolescents. The word racism was used 138 times. A counselor educator tweeted, “If predominately white schools think they don't need to address racism, particularly for young white males who are confused, impressionable, and vulnerable to exploitation... you helped make this war happen.”

The network identified words that described race. Black was used 114 times, and every tweet was about race. The tweet content ranged from mentioning Black and Brown students, Black counselors, Black girls, or Black athletes. One tweet from a counselor educator responded to another tweet that has since been deleted. The tweet said, “Wow. We need antiracist school counselor education NOW. Here is root cause of Black students' frustration and anger. We need

a new brand of our profession.” The user also mentioned other counselor educators and organizations focusing on school counseling. Latinx was used five times, Latino two times, Latina four times, and Hispanic eight times. A tweet that contained Latinx recommended another school counselor’s session at the ASCA conference. It said, “So many great points about working with our Latinx population!” Asian was used four times in the 2020 network. A practicing school counselor tweeted, “@MrFranchise34 talking about microaggressions with Asian American students & making sure our anti-racist lessons are inclusive #schat #antiracistSC.” Native American was not used in the 2020 network. Table 12 lists the content words by year and shows the number of times the term showed up as a hashtag and only a word.

Transgender did not show up as a word used in any tweets. The use of LGBTQIA+ increased to twenty-one in 2020, which is five more times than in 2016, but the users who tweeted or retweeted the LGBTQIA+ acronym were more diverse. Previously mentioned users, @dctrdarrell and @mattjbeck still tweeted, but others such as @LRossSchCnslr, @e\_goodmanshoot, @SChenHayes, @karaieva24, and @CounselorDiego also tweeted about LGBTQIA+ youth.

**Table 12**

*Content words used by hashtags and words.*

Terms	2012		2016		2020	
	Hashtag	Word	Hashtag	Word	Hashtag	Word
Advocacy	2	14	1	14	2	65
Advocate	0	17	3	34	1	28
Equity	0	0	8	13	24	116
Ethnicity	0	0	0	0	0	6
Race	0	3	0	4	0	69
Racism	0	0	4	12	6	138
Transgender	0	0	0	0	0	0
LGBTQIA+	23	28	3	16	4	21
Black	0	4	0	16	0	116
Latinx	0	7	3	7	0	19

Asian	0	0	0	0	0	4
Native American	0	0	0	0	0	0

*Note.* The total numbers for LGBTQIA+ include other acronym versions such as LGBTQ, LGBT, or LGBTQIA. Latinx includes Latino, Latina, and Hispanic.

**Summary.** There was a significant change over time for some content terms, while others were not mentioned at all. Transgender and Native American did not appear in hashtags or as words in the 2012, 2016, or 2020 network data. Other terms, such as advocacy and LGBTQIA+, were used more than ten times in each network. As the networks grew, the words increased for most of the terms. Words such as equity, racism, race, Black, and Latinx increased each network year. The word advocate increased in 2016 and decreased use in 2020. Asian only appeared in the 2020 network.

### ***Sentiment***

**2012.** For this study, sentiment was analyzed by looking at words categorized as positive or negative. There were more words labeled as positive than negative in the 2012 network. Examples of positive words were great, best, love, and free. Great was the most used word, and love was the second most used word for positive sentiment. Advocate appeared in the list for positive sentiment. Bullying was the most used word labeled as negative sentiment. It appeared that many of the negative words surrounded mental health language. Some words were anxiety, stress, suicide, crisis, abuse, and depression. While LGBTQIA+ did not appear in the word list, the word queer appeared with negative sentiment. User @GwynethJones tweeted “Dear Queer Teen @ItGetsBetter & #TheLetterQ BOOK GIVEAWAY...” The tweet’s content was positive even though Insight identified the word queer as negative. Figure 24 shows the top words for positive and negative sentiment for 2012.

### **Figure 25**

*2012 Positive and Negative Sentiment Word Clouds*



@EmoteCare stated, “A Positive School Climate Can Mean a Successful School Year...” The tweet content included successful, a form of the word success. Bullying, mistakes, drastically, and anxiety were a few of the words listed as negative sentiments. The word drastically was identified as the most used negative sentiment, and bullying became the fourth most used word in 2016 compared to the most used in 2012. @mscounslr tweeted, “Looking for resources to help HS students w/ anxiety. Ideas? #scchat #hscchat #sccrowd.”

The words funny and joke were categorized as negative sentiments. The tweet containing the word joke stated, “Why College Rankings Are a Joke...” User @rawolfson referred to a New York Times article that negatively discussed college rankings. #scchat co-creator @sch\_counselor retweeted and said, “So funny! #scchat” in response to a video posted. Although the word joke could refer to something funny, it was used negatively in this context. Then, the word funny was not used negatively according to a tweet that contained it. Figure 26 illustrates a visual of positive and negative sentiment words.

## **Figure 26**

*2016 Negative and Positive Sentiment Word Clouds*



title. Another tweet referred to school counselors embracing race equity work. A few words categorized as negative sentiment were racism, racist, trauma, and miss. Many tweets that contained the phrase racism referred to an ASCA Town Hall: Racism in Schools. It appeared that people tweeted during the live townhall even though it was not on Twitter. The word deaf was identified as negative sentiment. @MrBatianoRI tweeted, “School counselor of k-12 deaf students with a #clearthelist any help would be deeply appreciated.” The tweet content does not use the word deaf negatively. Figure 27 illustrates two-word clouds, one of the words representing positive sentiment and the other negative sentiment.

**Figure 27**

*2020 Positive and Negative Sentiment Word Clouds*







2012 and 2016 but not in 2020. The word great was the top-used word listed as positive sentiment in all three years. Black, Latinx, Asian, Native American, transgender, race, ethnicity, equity, or LGBTQIA+ did not appear as labeled positive or negative sentiment in any of the year's networks. Racism was categorized as negative sentiment and appeared in 2016 and 2020. In 2020, racism was the most used negative word. Advocate appears as positive sentiment in all three data networks, and advocacy was not labeled. Table 11 shows the top ten words in each network year for positive and negative sentiment.

**Table 13**

*Top Ten Positive and Negative Sentiment Words*

2012		2016		2020	
Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative
Great	Bullying	Great	Drastically	Great	Racism
Love	Bully	Success	Mistakes	Work	Racist
Best	Anxiety	Good	Critical	Important	Trauma
Good	Blow	Love	Bullying	Support	Miss
Free	Risk	Helping	Anxiety	Grateful	Fall
Nice	Anger	Best	Trauma	Excited	Issue
Happy	Tragedy	Work	Hard	Love	Hard
Ready	Issues	Free	Stress	Amazing	Anxiety
Welcome	Struggling	Support	Suicide	Like	Critical
Thank	Bullies	Important	Crisis	Right	Crisis

**Discussion**

This exploratory social network analysis study aimed to explore school counseling professionals' use of the #scchat hashtag on Twitter. Given there was no Social Network Analysis research regarding #scchat, this study was a first of its kind. Three different years, 2012, 2016, and 2020 were samples representing the beginning, middle, and end of the first ten years of #scchat. The network data from each year addressed the two research questions. The literature shows that other education professionals use Twitter for professional development, and connection has increased. Still, no studies used NodeXL for Social Network Analysis regarding school counselors' use of the platform.

The researcher applied Feminist Theory and Social Network Theory when they interpreted the results. Feminist Theory requires the researcher to consider how power and privilege appear within the counseling profession. They also had to consider their identities and biases when looking at different users and how the users identify. It was sometimes difficult to look at the results, especially in 2012 and 2016, where there were few users of color. As an insider included in the network data, the researcher remained vigilant not to have any of their tweets as examples. Social Network Theory helped identify relationships and interpret how they were connected. Although the data presented the connections, the researcher had to consistently check in with themselves to not include their personal thoughts toward any users in the network. For example, although ASCA (@ASCAtweets) does not directly use #scchat, they are retweeted and replied to by others who include the hashtag. It means that although the researcher could have negative thoughts regarding the organization, they are not influential and critical to the profession on Twitter. The following discussion examines both research questions and explains the results incorporating the theoretical approaches of this study.

**Research Question 1: How have school counseling professionals (i.e., school counselors, school counselor educators, district leaders over school counselors) use of Twitter changed over ten years when using the #scchat hashtag?**

The number of school counseling professionals who used #scchat increased with each sample year. The school counseling networks reflected an increase in the number of nodes (i.e., users), tweets, and ties (i.e., connections) of those who engaged with #scchat. It appears to align with the increasing number of overall Twitter users since 2014. They reported their highest number of tweets (Maxwell, 2022). What is critical to point out is the increase in ties. Not only were there more people tweeting, but they were connecting with more people. Schultz (2022) reported that school counselors use social media to connect with other professionals. The growth in the number of ties supports the research that Twitter allows people to link to other professionals they would not usually have access to in person.

It is also important to mention that even though 2016 and 2020 were not representative of the entire year, the numbers support the growth. If the whole year was represented, then it can be assumed that the number of tweets for each of those years would be higher for this study. The following discussion addresses, in more detail, each metric analyzed for research question one using subheadings, but due to overlap, other metrics could be mentioned in different sections.

***Group Clusters***

The number of group clusters and resulting nodes in those clusters is another way to illustrate the use of #scchat. The most significant growth occurred between 2012-2016 when looking at the largest group cluster size, but the change for 2016-2020 also increased considerably. The group clusters in the 2012 network had fewer ties, and the clusters appeared less dense. Within each group cluster of each network, there is a user with the highest

betweenness who seems to be at the center of the cluster in the visualization. While the overall size of the groups increased, the general shape was similar in each network year.

Interestingly, the users with the top betweenness centrality were always in the top five or six group clusters, and most of the users were in these clusters. Then there were many small clusters that included two to three users with minimal connections to the larger clusters. Even though these small clusters were included in the networks, their influence was small.

### ***Betweenness Centrality***

The next metric is betweenness centrality. Surprisingly, the two co-creators did not have the highest betweenness. While they were influential in starting the hashtag, their Twitter accounts were not necessarily connected to most other users. At the time, Dr. Schultz was a practicing school counselor, and Dr. Mason was a counselor educator at a university. Since the hashtag's initial purpose was to connect practitioners working in schools, it explains why Dr. Mason might not have been the top influencer. Dr. Danielle Schultz (i.e., @sch\_counselor) had the second highest, and Dr. Erin Mason (i.e., @ecmmason) had the ninth highest betweenness in 2012. Remarkably, neither was in the top ten highest betweenness for 2016 and 2020.

In contrast, both were active on Twitter and used the hashtag and the growth of #scchat developed new influencers in the network. The #scchat hashtag's focus, in the beginning, was toward practicing school counselors but looking at the networks over time, there are more organizations and counselor educators as influencers. Specifically, in 2016, @nacac (i.e., National Association for College Admissions Counseling), @naviance (i.e., a college and career readiness software), and @ascatsweets (i.e., American School Counselor Association) were in the top ten betweenness. School counselors are a part of these organizations, and some use Naviance in their work with students, so it appears that in 2016 there was a significant focus on college and

careers when people used #scchat. Since the data set started in August, the connection to those organizations aligns with school counselors' work with seniors and college applications.

Similarly, in 2020 the top betweenness users were organizations and not individual people. With @nacac having the largest betweenness in the network, it appears that college and careers were popular topics but not as popular in 2016. Given that the data in the network started in March, when P-12 schools moved to online learning due to Covid-19, the spring and summer focus was not primarily on college and careers. Only two practicing school counselors were identified in the top ten. It is possible that practitioners were not as engaged with Twitter as they struggled to adjust and meet student needs and their own. It is assumed that @nacac is a strong influencer that could connect with other practitioners, and they most likely provided resources for school counselors trying to help students finish their senior year and finalize college plans in 2020. Three of the top ten users were school counselor educators: @karaieva24, @schenhayes, and @e\_goodmanscott. Each advocate for the profession and may have also provided resources to practitioners or other counselor educators. Due to more schedule flexibility in academia, counselor educators may have been more active during times of the day when school counselors could not be. It illustrates how #scchat developed beyond its initial purpose but does not explain why. Further information regarding this assumption is addressed in research question two.

### ***In-degree and Out-degree Centrality***

Although a node (user) could have a high betweenness, it does not mean it will have a high or the highest in-degree and out-degree centrality. For example, in Table 2, @kelly\_counselor has the fourth highest betweenness in the network but only has an in-degree centrality of 39. Her out-degree count is 77. It is the same for in-degree and out-degree centrality. Users could be higher in one and have a lower number than in the other.

Many of the same nodes remain in the top ten in the sample networks, but not all of them. @sch\_counselor had the highest in-degree centrality for 2012, meaning she would be considered a popular node in the network. Borgatti et al. (2018) described in-degree as the node that provides resources or tweets information. Considering that @sch\_counselor was a co-creator, her high in-degree aligns with her betweenness. Therefore, not only does she serve as a core node that connects the network, but she is also the one who may provide resources or support.

Similarly, @dctrdarrell has the highest out-degree centrality with 162. He also has a high betweenness centrality, so not only is he critical to how the network is connected, but he also receives more information or resources than anyone else. @dctrdarrell had the second highest in-degree centrality, which could mean that when he tweeted, it encouraged others to tweet back. The participants recognized reliable, trusting, or knowledgeable users and often looked to them for support or resources.

In 2016, @dctrdarrell was no longer in the top ten betweenness, in-degree, or out-degree centralities. They were active and popular during the beginning years of #scchat but appeared not as engaged in 2016. The nodes that identified as professional organizations also had higher in-degrees. Due to the 2016 network data starting in July, it made sense that organizations like @nacac, @naviance, and @ascatsweets were in the top ten. Since these organizations had many followers and high betweenness, they were a significant resource for school counselors working in high schools to assist students with post-secondary college or career plans. The fall season is heavy with college applications, letters of recommendation, and scholarship applications. Also, the change in the date when students can complete their FAFSA could have been another task where school counselors needed resources. For example, on October 19, 2016, @nacac tweeted,

"Free @collegeaccess webinars highlight #FAFSA resources," with a link to the webinars and a graphic along with #scchat. @naviance tweeted, "The digital divide: How @everyone\_on is Helping to Connect Students and Families to the Internet." They provided a link and used the #scchat hashtag. The literature acknowledges the digital divide between White and marginalized communities, and although the discussion significantly increased during remote education in 2020, it was a phenomenon discussed in 2016 (Moore & Vitale, 2018). It is also evidence of how policies and laws impact school counseling professionals and how engaging with Twitter could provide resources that support marginalized students.

Overall, as #scchat grew, the influencers changed, and the level of influence increased based on betweenness, in-degree, and out-degree centralities. The goal of #scchat's creation was to increase community among practicing school counselors, and according to the results, a network formed in the first ten years. The community also shifted with the growth, bringing other school counseling professionals like counselor educators. This shift from practicing school counselors being influencers to more counselor educators appears to align with research and journal publications. Erford et al. (2018) completed a meta-analysis of the Professional School Counseling Journal (PSC) where they found that 77% of the lead authors worked at a university in the first five volumes, and it increased to approximately 90% in the last ten volumes (Erford et al., 2018). They also reported that practitioners are substantially underrepresented as lead authors and collaborations between scholars and practitioners. The significant decline in practitioners as authors in PSC and the decreasing influence of practitioners who use #scchat might lead to unintended power and privilege issues. The social hierarchy of being a counselor educator in a patriarchal society assumes they have a higher influence which can affect a practitioner's willingness to tweet.

### *User Location*

Location was another metric explored in the sample networks. Some users shared their location, and others did not. Twitter allows users to share their location, so the location is only known if indicated in the user profile or a tweet. However, the user's location is not always the same as the location of the entity of the account, as in the case of an organization. For example, ASCA (@ascatweets) is headquartered in Alexandria, VA. The person who manages the account might not be known, or if they are known, it does not mean they live in VA. This information is vital when exploring the locations of users who use #scchat because it impacts the total number of users in certain states. Unless the researchers were to reach out to every user, they would not have been able to explore why someone does or does not share their location.

Since the co-creators are from the U.S., it is unsurprising that #scchat activity is concentrated mainly in the U.S., but other countries use the hashtag too. Most frequently, @spellmancann, a practicing school counselor in Canada, has used the hashtag to connect to other school counseling professionals. Studies with other educators reported that Twitter allowed them to communicate with people all over the country and the world (Trust et al., 2018). The expansion of locations helps professionals be able to advocate on a larger scale.

When observing the U.S. map, most users were on the east coast side of the U.S. In comparing each year by looking only at the maps, there do not appear to be any significant changes. Most users were concentrated on the east coast in 2012, 2016, and 2020. The states between the Mississippi River and the Rocky Mountains, where the areas are more rural, have the lowest number of users, but in Kansas, a large concentration of users increased in each network year. It was due to the users reporting their location as the U.S., and Kansas was the identified state even if the user did not live there. Some were school counselors, but others were



organizations such as @bettermakeroom, which former first lady Michelle Obama created to help with post-secondary planning.

There are many counseling master's programs and counselor education doctoral programs on the east coast of the U.S., particularly in Virginia, Maryland, and Washington D.C., where many counselor educators are active on Twitter and use #scchat. As a result, they could have more students join and engage with Twitter, and their influence becomes more significant. The location of school counselor training programs could also tie into the increase of counselor educators who engage with #scchat and the rise in counselor educators who had a high betweenness centrality.

The top location for 2012 was Virginia, and Washington, D.C. was the top location for 2016 and 2020. Interestingly, these locations are almost on top of each other when looking at the map, and other places in VA, like Charlottesville, are identified. Although Washington D.C. was calculated to have the most users, there could be states like VA where some users say a specific city and others name only the state as their location. There was growth in the number of tweets and nodes in each network. Meaning that even if the top areas were not consistent for each year, the number of school counseling professionals within the locations grew. For example, the number of users identified in Washington, D.C., 2016 increased by 49. Due to this study being the first of its kind, there is limited ability to determine if the growth aligns with the research, but compared to other SNA metrics in this study, it aligns with the change, such as the increase in the size of the group clusters.

### ***Frequency of Tweets Per Day and Hour***

The overall number of tweets increased with each year's sample, and the trend of when users tweeted was consistent. Aligning with a typical sleep and school schedule, the number of

tweets decreased when school counseling professionals typically sleep and work. Then in the afternoon and evening, the number of tweets increased again. Whether a practicing school counselor, counselor educator, or district administrator, each role would typically be working during the day. That is not always the case for counselor educators, which could also account for tweets late in the evening or during the school day since they could teach an evening class. The users that tweeted during the school day were not identified.

Once a month, on the second Wednesday, a live #scchat occurs at 8-9:00 PM EST. When analyzing the data, the assumption was that Wednesdays, specifically in the evenings, would have the largest number of tweets compared to other days and times, but that was only true for 2012. In 2016 and 2020, Thursdays had the most significant number of tweets. Even if someone misses the live chat, if they follow the #scchat hashtag, they can still see and respond to the tweets from the live chat. It could carry over to the next day, meaning Thursday could have higher tweets if enough people engaged with the tweets. The weekends had the lowest numbers, and since users were most likely off work, they would not have engaged as much to connect or find resources. Conferences, such as the ASCA conference, start on a weekend and then carry over into the weekdays in July every year. Therefore, it would increase the number of people who use #scchat during that time because they are tweeting about traveling to the conference or they arrived early for pre-conference meetings.

Lastly, as social media and networking became more popular, school districts started creating social media policies for staff. Therefore, many practicing school counselors may not tweet during the school day due to the possibility of violating that policy. If school counselors have specific Twitter accounts for their school's counseling department, they may be more likely

to post during the school day since it is work-related. The policies may impact when and how school counseling professionals tweet and how they advocate for students.

### ***Time Joined***

The last analysis for research question one addresses the time users joined Twitter. According to the data, some users joined Twitter before Dr. Mason and Dr. Schultz created #scchat, but most joined when or after the creation. The number of people who used Twitter increased, and hashtag use increased, so it supports that there was change over time. Although 2009 had the most users join, 2011 only had one less user at 259 in the 2012 network. For 2009, the first six months of the year, specifically March and April, had the highest numbers. The year 2011 had double digits for every month, but June – October had the highest numbers. 2009 President Obama was sworn into office, Iowa became the third state to legalize same-sex marriage, Common Core was launched, and the Race to the Top initiative began (Newsbank, 2009; Pettys, 2011). In 2011, charter schools became more popular, the growth measure for teacher evaluations was introduced, the Save Our Schools march took place in Washington, D.C., and Osama bin Laden was killed (Kuehn, 2011; Fatimah & Syukur, 2019). The events in each of those years occurred before the use of #scchat, so the content of those users' tweets was not collected, but those events could have impacted school counselors and their work.

The 2016 network also had users that joined Twitter in 2007. Therefore, school counselors used Twitter before #scchat, but it may not have been for professional purposes. As more school counselors became aware of the hashtag, their interest in joining Twitter may have increased, so there was steady growth throughout the ten years. Since Dr. Erin Mason, a co-creator of #scchat, is a counselor educator, her work with graduate students most likely

influenced school counselors in training to join Twitter. If those students obtained jobs in schools, they most likely influenced other counselors in their department or school district.

While the number of school counseling professionals who joined Twitter increased over time, there was a significant drop in new users in 2020. While the stress of Covid-19 likely influenced the decline of new school counseling professionals, it is also interesting since people were more isolated and lost their in-person connections to other professionals. Schultz's (2022) research stated that school counselors use Twitter to connect to others, and the current users may have increased how much they engage with others, but there were not a significant number of new school counseling professionals who engaged with #scchat.

**Research Question 2: how has school counseling professionals' (i.e., school counselors, school counselor educators, district leaders over school counselors) advocacy for marginalized populations changed over time when using Twitter?**

For research question two, a quantitative content analysis was conducted on each sample network's hashtags, words, and words categorized as positive and negative sentiment. Specific terms were identified based on the literature review and the sociopolitical climate (See Table 10). The definition of advocacy for this study is a user posting on Twitter in support of marginalized student populations.

***Hashtags***

There was a significant increase in the use of other hashtags along with #scchat among the three years of samples. When it came to advocating for marginalized students, the content of the hashtags in 2012 did not show many hashtags that either specifically included advocacy or terms that explicitly mentioned marginalized populations (e.g., Black, LGBTQIA+). The tweets that contained #advocacy targeted advocating for the profession, not students. The lack of hashtags surrounding marginalized populations in 2012 may have been because #scchat was still

in its infancy, only having existed for a little over a year. Hashtags are also topics for users to follow, so there could be content about advocating for marginalized populations, but it was not reflected in the hashtag. #advocacy or #advocate as hashtags in 2016 and 2020 were not significantly different than in 2012. The use in 2016 was about the same as in 2012, and the hashtag referred to advocating for the profession, not students specifically. The use of advocacy or advocate in 2020 was like the previous sample years and had only a few uses. There could have been more tweets that used #advocacy or #advocate in 2016 and 2020 since certain months are missing from those data sets. However, even with incomplete years, more tweets were collected overall, and advocacy use was not significantly different.

While 2012 lacked direct hashtags surrounding marginalized student populations, 2016 and 2020 saw increases in hashtags surrounding race, sexual, and gender identities. The increase in hashtags that contain racism and equity was not surprising, considering President Trump's election occurred in November of 2016, Covid-19 occurred in 2020, followed by the current political climate that began to attack CRT and transgender kids.

The #edchat hashtag is widely used among different educational professionals, so when it was used with #scchat, the chances of communicating and connecting with teachers, principals, and other educational professionals were higher than using #scchat alone. Tanaka (2020) stated that a new #edchat topic is released every week on Tuesdays. One of the topics from June 2019 was asking how a teacher can sell a new idea to an administrator who might be slow to change (Tanaka, 2020). Although it appears the target audience is teachers for that specific topic, #edchat is used by many different educators, and this is a topic to which school counselors can also engage since they often advocate to administrators about their role. It can also connect school counseling professionals to other educators who advocate for marginalized student

populations. Although a hashtag like #scchat is valuable to the school counseling profession, others do not use it outside the profession like #edchat. Therefore, the school counseling network creates an echo chamber. The community comprises homogenous clusters where the shared information echoes back and forth within the network (Ahmed et al., 2022). The lack of diversity within the counseling profession and a lack of voices from outside the profession means school counselors, counselor educators, and district leaders are just speaking to each other.

Homogenous networks support the reason why the theory of weak ties is critical to social networks. Consequently, the lack of voices from outside of the school counseling field means other diverse information could be missing. Strong ties are essential to connect to others in the profession, and to receive support from those who understand your role is helpful. Yet, school counselors work within a system, and diverse voices, such as teachers, could help them build better relationships with other educators.

Overall, hashtags are beneficial when searching for specific topics that are frequently used. If someone is a basketball fan, they may search #NBAfinals to see what others are tweeting about the playoffs, or if they want to find events that support the LGBTQIA+ community, they could search #PrideMonth in June. Some Twitter users do not use hashtags at all. The results of this study also showed that hashtags cannot be the only indicator of how school counseling professionals advocate for marginalized student populations.

### ***Words***

There was an apparent change in the types of words used over time when using #scchat. School, students, and college are common words that school counselors use. Therefore, it is not surprising that the results would show those words as some of the most used. Also, certain words like school were paired with other words frequently. “School counselor” is an example because

although less than half of the times that school was used, it was paired with counselors. Since there are different types of counselors (i.e., career, mental health, marriage, and family), the use of school clarifies the type of counselor to which a user refers.

When examining the words identified for the content analysis, it is critical to remember that language used to describe different marginalized identities has developed since the beginning of #scchat. For example, LGBTQIA+ has become more inclusive, but in 2012 LGBT may have been the acronym frequently used. Also, words like advocacy or advocate were more frequently used when discussing advocating for the profession during the early years of #scchat. As the sociopolitical climate becomes more volatile, advocacy is used more when talking about students, particularly those who are marginalized. Even though the definition of advocacy or advocate did not change, how school counseling professionals used it changed. Initially, when they used the word advocacy in tweets, it was about the role of the school counselor (i.e., caseload sizes). Then the tweets containing the phrase advocacy became more student-focused.

It was interesting to see that some of the words were connected only to a few users. LGBTQIA+ and the other forms of the acronym were mostly tied to @dctrdarrell. Whether it was his original tweet, something he retweeted, or he was mentioned, unfortunately, in the 2012 network data, other school counseling professionals did not appear to engage as actively regarding LGBTQIA+ topics. 2016 did not see an increase in the acronym, but other users did engage. GLSEN was an organization that appeared in each network year.

There was a shift in 2020. Words that were rarely used, if at all, increased their frequency significantly in 2020. Equity was not found in any tweets in 2012, but in 2020 it was used 116 times. Similarly, racism was not included in any tweets in 2012, only used twelve times in 2016, and jumped to 138 times in 2020. Considering the increase in social unrest due to the continued

murders and systemic oppression of Black people and the evident inequities within school districts serving primarily Black and Brown students, the school counseling profession appeared to discuss more social justice issues.

### *Sentiment*

What is critical about sentiment is not just the word that is labeled as positive or negative but the context in which it is written. For this study, when looking at the word clouds, it is clear that more positive words are identified in the 2012 and 2016 networks. The higher number of positive words does not mean there was more advocacy, but it could indicate that school counselors used more positive language on Twitter. In 2020 the number of words categorized as positive and negative appeared to be more even. Since many of the negative top sentiment words surrounded mental health (i.e., anxiety, trauma), school counseling professionals tweeted more about those topics. The increase aligns with literature that discusses the increase in mental health issues and how it impairs their ability to function academically (Dombo & Sabatino, 2019; King-White, 2019). The mental health issues were occurring in P-12 schools, and the agency or awareness of school counselors to tweet about it increased over time when using #scchat.

Similarly, with race, racism, sexual, and gender minorities, the issues of discrimination and oppression did not begin in 2020, but school counseling professionals tweeted about it more. The increase could connect to the high profile and highly publicized murders of Black people along with the explosive sociopolitical climate. Therefore, the increase in words identified as negative sentiment may not mean that school counseling professionals posted more negativity but that they are using language (i.e., systemic racism, mental illness, depression) to bring attention to issues plaguing marginalized students explicitly.



To bring attention to why language and context are so important when using social media are the words labeled as negative sentiment that could continue perpetuating discrimination. For example, the Insights platform identified the word queer as negative sentiment, but the tweet containing the word was in support of queer adolescents. Insights also labeled the word deaf as negative sentiment. Yet, the tweets containing the word were primarily used by a school counselor who is deaf and hard of hearing and often advocates for the population. There is already ongoing discrimination when thinking about the LGBTQIA+ population, so identifying terms like queer negatively perpetuates the hate. Although ability is not a marginalized identity included in this study, when thinking of working with students with a disability, referring to the word deaf negatively also enables systems to continue to discriminate against students with disabilities.

### **Implications**

The results of this study highlight a few ideas for school counseling professionals to consider as they continue their use of Twitter and engage with #scchat. Looking at research question one, the key influencers in the network have moved away from practicing school counselors to counselor educators and organizations. Since the hashtag was created with practitioners in mind, it is recommended that there be more outreach to P-12 practitioners and graduate students and more collaboration. Counselor educators can introduce Twitter to their graduate students, district leaders can talk to the school counselors in their school district about using Twitter for networking, and practicing school counselors can engage their departments or at conferences. Furthermore, these discussions can explore social media policies and how to navigate different topics. Not only can there be more outreach to increase engagement with #scchat, but training about how to practice advocacy on Twitter and maintaining safety should be

increased. Unfortunately, the fact that the national organization, ASCA, does not use #scchat is also an issue. They were shown as a significant influence in the data networks, and if they used #scchat, this could further the reach to school counselors.

Another implication for the profession is to develop universal and up-to-date language. Since terms are continuously evolving, it can be hard to keep up with the changes, and depending on someone's location could determine what language they use. Since school counseling professionals work in either P-12 or higher education systems, this language must also align with other educators such as teachers, school nurses, school social workers, teacher educators, and principal training programs. Hence it must be a collaborative effort within all of education. The common language suggestion aligns with the following implication, which addresses the theory of weak ties and the echo chamber created by only engaging with school counseling professionals.

Those in the profession must explore other educator hashtags like #edchat to be included in conversations with teachers, principals, and other educators. Hashtags like #scchat benefit school counselors and have grown throughout the years since it's creation. Yet it targets a small population compared to hashtags that target broader related populations. Even with #edchat being the second and third most used hashtag in each sample year, the decline in the use can still impact how school counseling professionals interact with other educators on Twitter. The significant decrease in #edchat use could indicate the isolation of the school counseling profession from other educators, meaning they only hear information from themselves. That isolation is not beneficial to the work since there is still some confusion regarding the role and the change from the old term of guidance counselors. School counseling professionals should be more involved in social networking with other educators to increase collaboration and advocacy

efforts. It also could increase the number of weak ties, which brings in diverse information. Therefore, increasing the use of #edchat (and other popular hashtags) and participating in other educational live chats could expand connections to other educators to further advocate for marginalized populations.

There was evidence of change throughout the ten years analyzed in this study, but when location is analyzed, it shows a large amount of the U.S. where school counselors are not involved in using #scchat on Twitter. Although there was no way to find out the reason for the lack of engagement, there needs to be increased training for the school counseling profession, including practicing school counselors, school counselors in training, district leadership, and counselor educators. Further training can also engage more practicing school counselors to help return to the focus of #scchat on practitioners. For example, counselor educators who engage in advocacy work can model and support practitioners and district leadership in their efforts to create changes at the school level. Counselor educators can also increase collaboration with practitioners, giving practicing school counselors the opportunity to engage in advocacy work through research and publication.

Overall, the data shows that school counseling professionals do advocate for marginalized student populations on Twitter, but there is more work that needs to be done to continue and increase engagement with #scchat. Along with the discussed implications, future research can create more literature surrounding school counseling professionals and their Twitter use.

### **Future Research**

This study explored school counseling professionals' use of Twitter over ten years and how they use Twitter to advocate for marginalized populations. Further research needs to be

conducted to learn more about the social networks of school counseling professionals and their use of Twitter. A deeper investigation of social networks would allow for more insight into the benefits and impact of advocating on social media. The results of this study indicated changes in how school counseling professionals used Twitter. Future research identified by research question one would be to find out more about where school counseling professionals live. Learning about users' locations could provide a further understanding of their advocacy engagement based on where they live or if they are in a state that has enacted legislation that oppresses marginalized groups or censors educators.

Another future research study would be to expand the analysis to other years not used in this study, and the sample years happened to be election years, which was an unintentional result. A study exploring other years within the ten-year timeline and incorporating 2022 would show a more detailed picture of the data. Along with learning more details, interviews with school counseling professionals who use the #scchat hashtag would provide more of an understanding of how and why they use Twitter for advocacy. Lastly, research focusing on the monthly live chats to learn more about the content would benefit future live chats and learn who participates.

### **Limitations**

Limitations to this study included issues in collecting data that represented an entire year. Even though there was an increase in the use of #scchat among school counseling professionals, the lack of full-year data did not allow for the missing information to be analyzed. The closing of access to API data created a barrier that did not allow for other data to be collected. Another limitation was the vagueness of participant data. Although the study focused on the networks and use of #scchat, there are few details regarding the social identities of the participants. Knowing

more about the individuals who advocated for marginalized student populations could help differentiate the types of training needed.

### **Conclusion**

This study aimed to explore how school counseling professionals' use of Twitter changed over ten years when using #scchat and how they advocate for marginalized student populations on Twitter. The results showed a change in the frequency of use of #scchat, an increase in users, and connections between users. Additionally, the research also showed key influencers, the group clusters, and when users tweeted the most in each year's network. The study analyzed the content and displayed the most used hashtags but also discovered that hashtags may not be the most reliable way to determine if school counselors advocate on Twitter. A quantitative content analysis of individual words showed the use of specific words in each year's data set aligned with the sociopolitical climate, especially in 2020. Lastly, the sentiment analysis illustrated how words are categorized and that the content of the tweets matters.

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